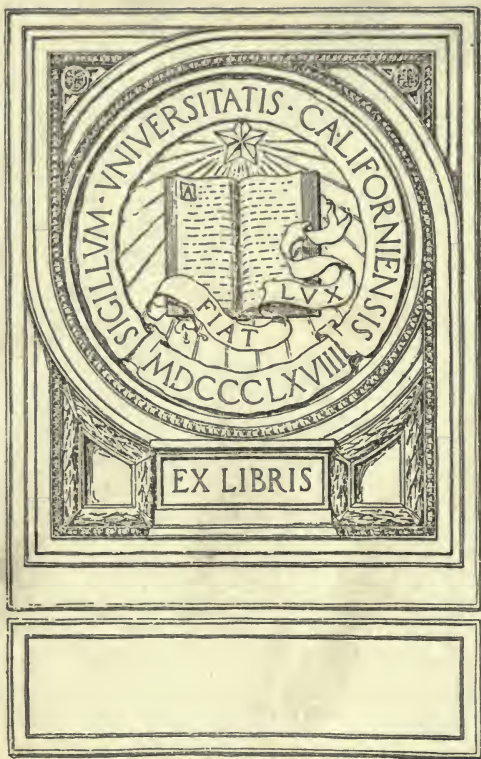




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THE KENTISH COAST

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DOVER CASTLE: THE WHITE CLIFFS OF ALBION.

THE KENTISH COAST

BY

CHARLES G. HARPER

*"Kent, in the commentaries Cæsar writ,
Is termed the civil'st place of all this isle :
Sweet is the country, because full of riches ;
The people liberal, valiant, active, wealthy."*

KING HENRY THE SIXTH (Second Part).



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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
DEPTFORD AND PETER THE GREAT . . .	I

CHAPTER II

GREENWICH—THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL—THE “ FUBBS YACHT ”—THE GREENWICH WHITEBAIT DINNERS—WOOLWICH—THE “ PRINCESS ALICE ” DISASTER—LESNES ABBEY—ERITH—DARTFORD	15
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III

STONE — GREENHITHE — NORTHFLEET — HUGGENS’S COLLEGE — ROSHERVILLE — GRAVESEND — SHORNEMEAD — CLIFFE—COOLING — THE HUN- DRED OF HOO—THE ISLE OF GRAIN—HOO ST. WERBURGH—UPNOR CASTLE—STROOD . . .	31
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

ROCHESTER AND CHATHAM—BROMPTON—GILLING- HAM — GRANGE — OTTERHAM QUAY — LOWER HALSTOW—IWADE	57
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

	PAGE
SHEPPEY	67

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPTURE OF JAMES THE SECOND—FAVERSHAM	88
-------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII

MILTON - NEXT - SITTINGBOURNE — SITTINGBOURN — OLD INNS—MURSTON—LUDDENHAM . . .	94
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII

GOODNESTONE — GRAVENEY — SEASALTER — WHIT- STABLE AND THE OYSTER FISHERY . . .	103
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX

HERNE BAY—RECVLVER—WANTSUM—SARRE. .	116
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X

THANET'S CORNFIELDS — MONKTON — MINSTER-IN- THANET—BIRCHINGTON—QUEX PARK—WEST- GATE—DANDELION	130
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

MARGATE	144
-------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

KINGSGATE—THE NORTH FORELAND—BROADSTAIRS —ST. PETER'S	156
--------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CONTENTS

vii

CHAPTER XIII

	PAGE
RAMSGATE	167

CHAPTER XIV

PEGWELL BAY—EBBSFLEET—THE LANDINGS OF HENGIST AND OF ST. AUGUSTINE—RICHBOROUGH	177
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV

SANDWICH	188
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVI

WORTH—UPPER DEAL—DEAL—THE GOODWIN SANDS	214
-----------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII

THE DOWNS AND THE DEAL BOATMEN	240
----------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII

WALMER CASTLE—KINGSDOWN—ST. MARGARET'S BAY	256
--------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIX

DOVER—THE CASTLE AND ROMAN PHAROS—"QUEEN ELIZABETH'S POCKET-PISTOL"—THE WESTERN HEIGHTS	270
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XX

THE CHANNEL PASSAGE—THE NATIONAL HARBOUR AND ITS STRATEGIC PURPOSE—SWIMMING AND FLYING THE CHANNEL	284
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXI

	PAGE
SHAKESPEARE'S CLIFF—SAMPHIRE—THE CHANNEL TUNNEL—COAL IN KENT—THE WARREN . . .	298

CHAPTER XXII

FOLKESTONE—THE OLD TOWN AND THE NEW— DICKENS AND “PAVILIONSTONE”—SANDGATE . . .	308
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIII

SHORNCLIFFE CAMP—THE ROYAL MILITARY CANAL —HYTHE—ROMNEY MARSH—THE MARTELLO TOWERS—THE “HOLY MAID OF KENT” . . .	319
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV

NEW ROMNEY—SMUGGLING DAYS—BROOKLAND— FAIRFIELD—SMALLHYTHE	344
------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXV

LYDD—DUNGENESS—CAMBER-ON-SEA	359
INDEX	371

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Dover Castle : The White Cliffs of Albion *Frontispiece*

	PAGE
Deptford Green : St. Nicholas' Church and Church-house	7
Greenwich Hospital	17
The " Old Fubbs Yacht," Greenwich	19
Ingress Abbey	33
Tilbury Fort	37
Curious old Boât-cottage at Chalk	39
Shornemead Battery	41
Cliffe Battery	42
Cooling Castle	43
The " Charter," Cooling Castle	45
Graves of the Comport Family, Cooling : " Like Chrysalids "	46
Stoke	49
St. James Grain	51
Upnor Castle	55
The Medway : Rochester Castle and Cathedral	61
The Medway : Hoo Forts	63
Upchurch	65
Lower Halstow	67
Minster-in-Sheppey	73
Tomb of Sir Robert de Shurland, Minster-in-Sheppey Church	76
Harty Church : Faversham in the Distance	83
Late Fourteenth-Century Chest, of German origin, carved with representation of a Tournament, Harty Church	85

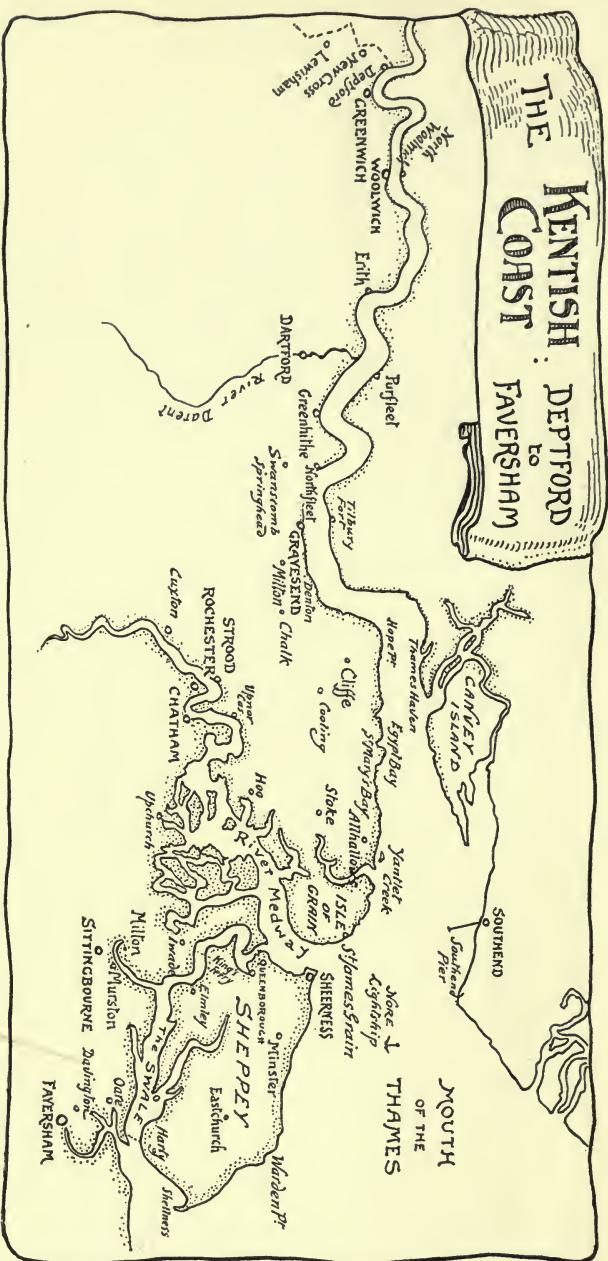
	PAGE
The Town Hall, Faversham	90
Faversham <i>Facing</i>	92
The Church, Milton Regis	95
The Town Hall, Milton Regis	97
Sign of the Adam and Eve, Milton-next-Sittingbourne . .	99
Luddenham	101
Whitstable : The Old Lighthouse and the Oyster Fleet .	111
Herne : The " Smuggler's Look-out "	120
Reculver	123
The Wantsum Ferry	126
St. Nicholas-at-Wade	128
Minster-in-Thanel Church	133
The Waterloo Tower, Quex Park	139
Dandelion Gateway	141
From the Palimpsest Brass, Margate Church	147
Kingsgate	157
The North Foreland Lighthouse <i>Facing</i>	158
Broadstairs : York Gate	163
Broadstairs <i>Facing</i>	164
Thanet as an Island, showing the Wantsum, From an ancient map	185
Fishergate, Sandwich	189
The Town Hall, Sandwich	211
Upper Deal	215
The Quaint Foreshore of Deal	221
The Goodwin Sands : " A dangerous flat and fatal " <i>Facing</i>	236
The East Goodwin Lightship	238
Walmer Castle	258
Entrance to Walmer Castle	259
Walmer Castle, from the Sea	262
St. Margaret's Bay	263
Westcliff	268

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xi

	PAGE
Dover Castle	<i>Facing</i> 272
Colton's Tower, Dover Castle	273
The Church of St. Mary-in-the-Castle, with the Roman Pharos, Dover	275
The National Harbour, Dover	287
Shakespeare's Cliff	<i>Facing</i> 298
Shakespeare Cliff Colliery, and the Coast towards Folkestone	304
The Stade, and Old Tackle-Boxes, Folkestone	310
Interior, Sandgate Castle	316
Hythe	321
Romney Marsh : The Martello Towers and Military Canal, Moonlight	<i>Facing</i> 334
Lympne	331
Lympne Castle and Church	333
Bonnington Church	342
New Romney Church	345
Brookland Church	349
Fairfield Church	352
Smallhythe Toll-gate	354
Smallhythe Church	356
Smallhythe	357
Lydd Church	361
Dungeness : Lighthouse and Railway Station	366

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THE KENTISH COAST FROM DEPTFORD TO FAVERSHAM

MOUTH OF THE THAMES

More & Lymington

St James's Creek

Sherris

Warden Pt

Sheppey

Eastchurch

Embsay

THE SWALE

Harf

Sturston

Sittingbourne

Faversham

SOUTHEAST

Southend Pier

Yanley Creek

Stoke

Grain

Medway

Queensborough

Upchurch

Chatham

Strood

Rochester

Cuxton

Gravesend

Swansea

Springfield

Dartford

Purfleet

Enth

Woolwich

Greenwich

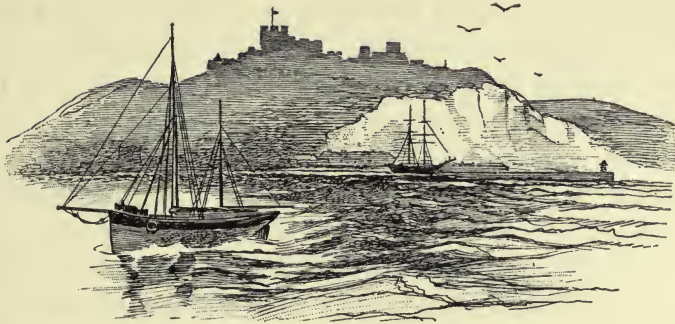
Deptford

New Cross

Lewisham

Canvey Island

Canvey Island



THE KENTISH COAST

CHAPTER I

DEPTFORD AND PETER THE GREAT

THE seaboard of Kent, and indeed the south coast of England in general, is no little-known margin of our shores. It is not in the least unspotted from the world, or solitary. It lies too near London for that, and began to be exploited more than a hundred and fifty years ago, when seaside holidays were first invented. The coast of Kent, socially speaking, touches both extremes. It is at once fashionable and exclusive, and is the holiday haunt of the Cockney: a statement that is not the paradox it at first sight appears to be, for the bracing qualities of its sea-air have always attracted all classes. We all ardently desire health, whether we are of those who romp on the sands of Margate or Ramsgate and eat shrimps in the tea-gardens of Pegwell Bay, or are numbered

among those who are guests at the lordly Lord Warden, the Granville, or the Cliftonville.

Where does the coast of Kent begin? It begins at Deptford, that crowded London suburb which would doubtless be considerably astonished in contemplating itself as a seaside town, and in fact does not do so. Yet Deptford's old naval history and ship-yard associations give it a salt-water flavour, and so we must needs say that the coast begins there. True, it is but the Thames whose murky waters lap the shore at Deptford; but the Thames here is the great commercial "London River," as seamen call it, the port to which resorts a goodly proportion of the world's shipping; and sea-going vessels crowd the fairway at all hours of day and night.

Past Greenwich, Woolwich, and Erith the Thames goes in its gradually broadening course, and at length comes to Gravesend. Gravesend Reach is, and has always been, by general consensus of opinion, the Sea-gate of London, and therefore, without any manner of doubt, on the coast.

The length of the coast of Kent, reaching from Deptford, and tracking round Sheppey and up the Medway estuary to Rochester, and in and out of the queer places wherever the foreshore wends, I make to be about one hundred and thirty-eight miles. It is—the whole of it—extremely interesting, and in places grandly beautiful and in others quietly pretty; and also along some other stretches, scenically (but never

historically) dull and drab. Below Gravesend, round the Isle of Grain, and round Sheppey and the Swale to Whitstable and Herne Bay, for instance, no one could perceive much of nobility actually in that coast-line of London clay and of low, muddy, or shingly foreshores. But where the chalk begins at Westgate, and the sea, ceasing from washing the clay and receiving the contaminations of the Thames and Medway, becomes more cleanly, the coast grows by degrees more striking.

As for the history that lies in the landings and embarkations, all along the coast of Kent, why, there was never such another coast as these storied shores. The fame of them begins at Gravesend, to which those foreigners who did not by any chance land at Dover generally came in the dangerous old days of the road between Dover and London. At Faversham a king who sought secretly to leave his kingdom was detained ; at Ebbsfleet landed the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa, and a hundred and fifty-seven years later came to that same spot a Christian missionary who came missionising very much against his own inclinations. At Deal, 1970 years ago—a tolerably long stretch of time—a great personage set the fashion in these numerous landings. I name Julius Cæsar, the noblest Roman of them all, who, as far as history tells us, was the first of any importance who ever burst into these unknown seas. Great personages have been doing the like ever since. The reason for this excep-

tional honour shown the Kentish coast, which has thus from the earliest times been the Front Door of England, is quite easily glimpsed on any sunny day anywhere between Deal and Folkestone, in the gleaming coast of France, which reminds us that most of those world-famous characters, in common with modern voyagers across the Channel, disliked the sea, and crossed by the "shortest route."

For the rest, Dover has been the scene of comings and goings uncountable, and to attempt recounting them would be wearisome indeed. Charles the Second, who had lively experiences in a hunted embarkation from our shores, experienced a welcome change in 1660, being received on his "glorious restoration" by his loyal subjects on Dover beach, and in 1683 came ashore at what was at that time "Bartholomew's Gate," in Thanet, which, in honour of that act of kingly condescension, has ever since been called "Kingsgate."

Kent, the *Cantium*, or country of the *Cantii*, mentioned by Julius Cæsar B.C. 54, and by other ancient writers, is thought to take its name from the peculiarity of its geographical position, jutting boldly out (or, in other words, "canted out") in an easterly direction, beyond the estuary of the Thames. There is another view taken of the origin of the word, a view which derives it from *caint*, the "open country," as distinguished from the woodland character of Sussex, the ancient "Andredswald"; but, against this, it does not

seem to be sufficiently established that Kent ever was such an open country, while the evidence of maps shows us that it does indeed project most markedly.

The Kentish Coast, then, begins little more than two and a half miles below London Bridge, the county boundary between Surrey and Kent being placed at Earl's Sluice, on the Grand Surrey Canal, in Deptford, just beyond the Surrey Commercial Docks. There, where the Royal Victualling Yard fronts the busy Thames, midway between Limehouse Reach and Greenwich Reach, begin the 138 miles of this strangely varied and exceptionally historic coast-line.

Undoubtedly the noblest and most fitting introduction is to proceed down river by steamer to Greenwich, for that way you perceive the greatness of the Port of London, and the majesty of the commercial and maritime interests of the capital; while to come "overland"—thus to dignify the approach by mean streets through Bermondsey and Rotherhithe—is an effect of squalor.

Deptford of to-day is an integral part of London. Not an ornamental part; indeed, no. Rather an industrial and wage-earning place. One does not "reside" at Deptford, and there are not a few who find it difficult even to live. It is thus not easy to associate it with that "Depeford" of which Chaucer writes in his "Canterbury Pilgrims," in 1383: "Lo, Depeford, it is half-way prime." The deep ford whence it obtained

its name is—or rather was—on the Ravensbourne, or the Brome, as that stream has sometimes been called, at the Broadway, on the Dover Road ; but the many changes that have taken place have of necessity abolished any possible likeness to the passage that existed in Chaucer's day. In any case, the Deptford around the Broadway, the present bridge over the Ravensbourne, and the road on to Blackheath is not the real intimate Deptford. That is only to be found on the river side of Evelyn Street, and in the neighbourhood of Creek Road, where the Ravensbourne broadens out into Deptford Creek. *Here* is the real Deptford ; more especially along the winding old street oddly—and with a curiously shipboard suggestion—named “Stowage,” and so to the old original church of Deptford, dedicated, as it should be in a waterside church, to St. Nicholas, the sailor's patron.

From the church, Deptford Green leads to the waterside, and adjoining is “Hughes' Fields.” Pleasantly rural although these names sound, candour compels the admission that they are, in fact, streets, with no suggestion of grass or meadows about them. The church of St. Nicholas dates from about 1697, and is a red-brick building in the curious taste of that time ; retaining, however, its old stone fifteenth-century tower. Flourishing plane-trees render the churchyard in summer not unpleasing, but the stranger is apt to see with a shudder the grisly stone gate-piers, surmounted by great sculptured skulls decora-



DEPTFORD GREEN : ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH AND CHURCH-HOUSE.

tively laurelled, as though Death were indeed the conqueror and the hereafter merely a vain thought. You might travel far, and yet find nothing so truly pagan.

Yet in this church is gathered much of Deptford's olden story, and in it are the memorials of captains and constructors of the Navy in times when Deptford was much more of a dockyard and seaport than a stirring quarter of London: monuments dating from before the days of Charles the Second and Pepys. Here you shall find that of Peter Pett, master shipwright in the King's yard, who died in 1652. The Latin epitaph upon this master craftsman quaintly describes him as "a thoroughly just man, and the Noah of his generation." It further goes on to say that "he walked with God and brought to light an invention even greater than that recorded of his prototype (for it was an ark by which our mastery of the sea and our rights were saved from shipwreck). He was called away from the tempests of this world, God being his pilot, and his soul resting in the bosom of his Saviour as in an ark of glory." This seventeenth-century Noah and inventive saviour of his country was the designer of the new frigate type of ship, the Dreadnought of its day.

Here also is the monument of Captain George Shelvocke, who thrice circumnavigated the globe, and died in 1742. The north side of the church facing Deptford Green, which as already remarked is not any longer a green, and cannot have

been for some two hundred years or more, forms a striking picture, for a group of red-brick eighteenth-century buildings, built on to it, is obviously associated with the church itself, although of absolutely domestic character.

The great days of Deptford began in the reign of Henry the Eighth, with the rise of the Royal Navy. It had been described as "a mean fishing village" until the "King's Yard," as the dockyard was named, was established in 1513—the first of our naval dockyards. There the earliest ships of the Navy took the water; vessels with the strange, and long since impossible, names of *Jesus*, *Holy Ghost*, *John Baptist*, *Great Nicholas*, and the like: sacred names whose use in such a connection would in our own days offend the ear with a sense of blasphemy. The naming of ships in that manner went out of fashion with the Reformation, and thereafter no English *Holy Trinity* set forth to deal out death and destruction upon the high seas. It was left to the Spaniards to couple holiness with conflict and slaughter, and for such awful names as *Madre de Dios*, *Sanctissima Trinidad*, and *Espiritu Sancto* to be associated with warfare.

The breach with Rome brought an entirely new order of names into the Royal Navy of England, of which that of the *Mary Rose* was for a time typical. But the domestic prettiness of love in a bower pictured by such as this presently gave place to others, of the robustious, defiant kind, such as the *Revenge*. It is true that there

was even another order, of which Sir Richard Hawkins's *Repentance* was representative. It marked the full swing of the religious feelings of Englishmen from the idolatries of Rome to that sinners' sense of abasement under conviction of sin which was a feature of Protestantism and the Puritan wave of thought.

It was in the year of the Armada that the *Repentance* took the water at Deptford. One would dearly like to know exactly why Hawkins gave his ship that name. Was he wrestling with the spirit, or had he in his mind some conceit of bringing repentance home to the Spaniards? The Elizabethan age was an age of ingenious conceits, and this may well have been one of them. But the name did not commend itself to Elizabeth when she was rowed from her palace of Greenwich to see the new ship, lying off Deptford beautiful in paint and gilding, and she renamed it the *Dainty*. Perhaps the great Queen considered *Repentance* to be a singularly ill-chosen name for a ship about to sail on a filibustering, piratical expedition. It is curious to consider that the expedition was a disastrous failure, and that a cynic dispensation of affairs thus mocked the original choice of a name; just as it did that of Sir Richard Grenville's *Revenge*, three years later, when the fight went against the English, and Grenville was killed and the Spaniards had their own revenge for much.

Seven years before her visit to Sir Richard Hawkins's ship, Elizabeth had made a notable

journey to Deptford, when she went aboard Francis Drake's *Golden Hind*, in which he had returned from circumnavigating the world, dined there, and knighted him after dinner.

Of all those ancient days and brave doings nothing remains. The dockyard, although from time to time enlarged, and actually in existence until 1869, is now but a memory, and the site of it is occupied by the Foreign Cattle Market. It was the smallest of all the dockyards, only thirty acres in extent; but it was the introduction of ironclad ships, and the greater depth of water required that led to its end, after a temporary closing between 1810 and 1844. The last vessel launched was H.M.S. *Druid*, in 1869.

When the average person thinks of Deptford, historically, it is not to Queen Elizabeth's visits his mind reverts, nor even to Mr. Secretary to the Admiralty Pepys, but rather to John Evelyn, to Sayes Court, and Peter the Great. John Evelyn, later of Wotton, settled at Deptford in 1651, at the mansion of Sayes Court, which had been originally the manor-house of West Greenwich. Here he made gardens and planted trees, the chief delight of his life. "I planted all the out-limites of the gardens and long walks with holly," he says, in March 1683.

He was extremely proud of his holly-hedges:

"Is there under heaven a more glorious and refreshing object of the kind than an impregnable hedge of about four hundred feet in length, nine feet high and five in diameter, at any time of the

year glittering with its armed and varnished leaves? The taller standards at orderly distances, blushing with their natural coral: it mocks the rudest assaults of the weather, beasts, or hedge-breakers—*Et illum nemo impune lacessit.*”

No one, he thought, could insult a holly-hedge with impunity.

In 1665 he found Deptford a very desirable place of retreat from the Great Plague of London. Later he let Sayes Court to Admiral Benbow, who in January 1698 sublet it for three months to the “Czar of Muscovy,” Peter the Great, who was as earnest then in planning a navy for Russia as the German Emperor of our own times in building a fleet for Germany. But the Czar himself worked as a shipwright in the dockyard and filled Sayes Court with a semi-savage household. His reputed chief amusement, that of continually wheeling a wheelbarrow through Evelyn’s cherished hedges, is perhaps the most vivid item of information about Peter the Great in the average Englishman’s mind: something of an injustice to the memory of that constructive autocrat, whose greatness was not built upon such eccentricities.

The generally received account of the Czar’s way with the hedges is that he trundled wheelbarrows through them; but it would appear that he was seated in the barrow, and that some one else did the wheeling.

Three months of “his Zarrish Majestie” and suite sufficed to very nearly wreck Sayes Court

and its gardens. Benbow and Evelyn claimed compensation from the Treasury for the damage, and the Treasury, considering that the Czar was the guest of William the Third in this country, admitted the liability and deputed Sir Christopher Wren to make a return. The document is still in existence. Among other items of dilapidations by that riotous tartaric company are :

	£	s.	d.
New floore to a Bogg House . . . . .	.	0	10 0
300 Squares in the Windows . . . . .	.	0	15 0
All the floores dammag'd by Grease & Inck . . . . .	.	2	0 0
For 3 wheelbarrows broke & Lost . . . . .	.	1	0 0

The total amount awarded by Treasury warrant of June 21st, 1698, was £350 9s. 6d., of which £162 7s. went to Evelyn.

Sayes Court was almost wholly demolished in 1728, and the remainder converted into a work-house. A plot of ground of fourteen acres, a portion of the old gardens, was secured in 1877 by Mr. W. J. Evelyn of Wotton, and converted into a public recreation ground. The Evelyns still own considerable property here, and although Court and gardens be gone, the historic sense is strong, and Evelyn Street, Czar Street, and Sayes Court Street, neighbour thoroughfares named after the Armada, Blake, and Wellington, and curiously contrast with the unimaginative "Mary Anne Buildings." It is, however, only right to say that the streets that remind one of those

historic people and that old mansion are as squalid as the buildings that honour Mary Anne.

Across the bridge that spans Deptford Creek, amid the surroundings of canals and wharves, you come into Greenwich. The Frenchman of the story illustrating the vagaries of English pronunciation, uncertain whether he wanted "Greenwich or Woolwich, he didn't know which," and pronouncing the place and names as spelled, was to be excused: how could he know it was "Grinnidge" and "Woolidge"? And how many Englishmen can speak the name of Rennes properly after the French use?

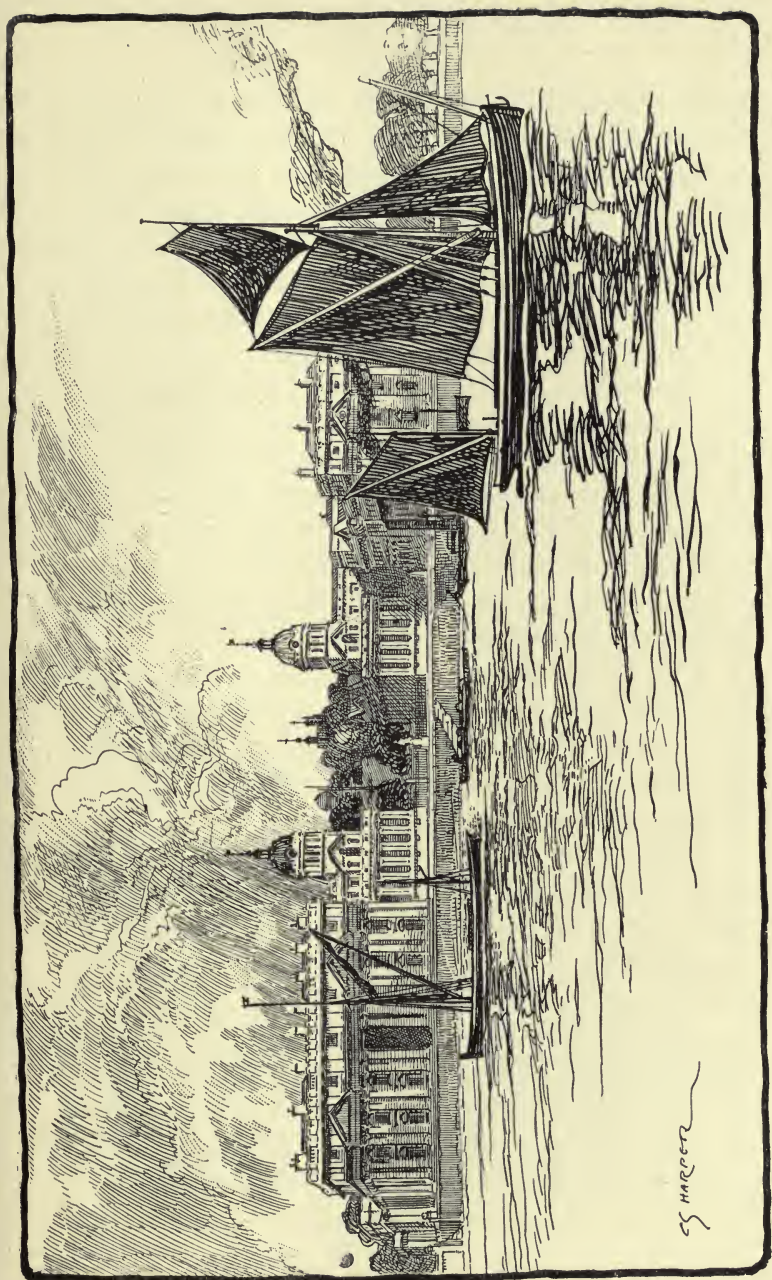
CHAPTER II

GREENWICH—THE ROYAL NAVAL HOSPITAL—THE
“ FUBBS YACHT ”—THE GREENWICH WHITE-
BAIT DINNERS—WOOLWICH—THE “ PRINCESS
ALICE ” DISASTER—LESNES ABBEY—ERITH—
DARTFORD

To fully appreciate the majestic appearance of Greenwich, you must view it from the river. Indeed, none of these waterside places from Deptford all the way to Gravesend, show to advantage on shore. Their historic associations and original scenic beauties are too overwhelmed with recent squalid developments. But from the busy Thames, Greenwich has a grandeur that is not easily to be expressed. This is due, of course, chiefly to the architectural interest of Greenwich Hospital, whose stately water-front is in part the work of Sir Christopher Wren. It began as a Royal Palace, arising on the site of the ancient palace of Placentia built here by Henry the Sixth, who also enclosed the park. In that vanished palace Henry the Eighth was born, and there died Edward the Sixth. Queen Mary in 1516, and Elizabeth in 1533 were born at Placentia, and from its terrace Elizabeth watched

the sails of her adventurous seamen setting forth to realms that Cæsar never knew. When Charles the Second found himself firmly established, he began to build himself a new and gorgeous palace on the site of Placentia, which had suffered much in the time of Cromwell. The beginnings of it alarmed Pepys, who was afraid it would cost a very great deal of money; but it was never finished as a royal residence, and was incomplete in 1692 when Queen Mary selected it as a home for wounded sailors returned from the battle of La Hogue. She died in 1694, and William the Third continued his wife's scheme. The buildings were completed and opened as a hospital in 1705.

I do not think there was ever a Greenwich Pensioner who liked living in Greenwich Hospital. That they ever reasoned out all the causes of their dissatisfaction is not to be supposed, but it must be quite obvious that residence amid these stately colonnades of Wren's design, and in these monumental buildings of such prodigious scale, was not a little like living in a mausoleum. Then there was the feeling of being a mere part of a system and subject to a certain degree of control which, together with an embarrassing public curiosity, must have made burdensome the life of any Greenwich Pensioner of independent mind. They are nowadays much happier in living with friends and relations; and probably suffer less from rheumatism than they did amid these draughty waterside colonnades, pleasant enough in summer, but where the bitter blasts of winter



GREENWICH HOSPITAL.

C. HARPER

can be really murderous. The views of an old Greenwich Pensioner on Wren's stately architecture would be interesting, but probably not at all flattering to the memory of that great master. They would not be worth listening to on the score of ideas about architectural style, but as criticisms of the Hospital as a dwelling-house they would be very much to the point.

In course of time, somewhere about 1870, the Greenwich Pensioners plucked up courage sufficient to express their dislike of the place ; and at last prevailed upon those Pharaohs, the Governors of the institution, to let them go from the House of Bondage and Draughts, so to speak, and to betake themselves and their pensions wheresoever it pleased them to live.

The Royal Naval College now partly occupies these great ranges of buildings ; and other portions, are, of course, well known as a museum, in which the Nelson relics and a curious collection of ship-models are to be seen.

There are, in one way and another, a good many recollections of Charles the Second at Greenwich. One of them is found in the name of the " Old Fubbs Yacht " inn, which stands in Brew-house Lane, hard by the " Ship." " The Fubbs Yacht " is nowadays more in the nature of an obscure public-house than an inn, but the back of it looks upon the river, and passengers by steamer to and from Greenwich Pier may easily see the odd and not beautiful name. No one, however, is in the least likely to associate it with Charles the Second ;

but the sign derives directly from his royal yacht, *Fubbs*, which succeeded his first yacht, the *Cleveland*, just as his favourite, the Duchess of Cleveland, was succeeded by Louise de K rouaille, whom he created Duchess of Portsmouth, and whom he nicknamed “Fubbs” because of her “plump and pleasing person.” Singularly enough, these are exactly the words in which the vicar describes Mrs. Partlet, the pew-opener, in the comic opera, *The Sorcerer*.

But you will hear nothing of this history at the inn itself, where the vague idea prevails that “Old Fubb” was a sportsman, who, at some time unspecified, sailed racing yachts. The situation of the house is now of the grimiest, with a busy coal-wharf on either side, but it is sung by



THE “OLD FUBBS YACHT” GREENWICH.

a modern poet—not Tennyson, nor Alfred Austin, nor Kipling, but by one J. G. Hamer, who writes thus, in the advertising way :

“ There’s an ancient house near the subway,
‘ Fubb’s Yacht,’ kept by William Pring,
In the old royal borough of Greenwich,
Where the bells of St. Alphage ring.

“ Do you want a good sixpenny dinner,
From twelve o’clock till two,
You’ll get what you want at the ‘ Old Fubb’s Yacht,’
From steak-pie to Irish stew.

“ A jolly good tea for fourpence,
You can have at this well-known spot,
And enjoy yourself by the silvery Thames,
At the cosy and smart ‘ Fubb’s Yacht.’ ”

Together with much more to the same effect. I fear no contradiction when I say that Tennyson never wrote anything like this.

Beyond the stately Hospital, along a humble waterside street where the riverside “ Yacht ” and “ Three Crowns ” inns hang out their signs, the inquisitive stranger will find the Hospital of the Holy Trinity, sometimes called Norfolk College, an alms-house for a number of old men, founded together with another at Clun in Shropshire, and one for women at Castle Rising in Norfolk, by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, in 1814. It is a quaint, white-painted group of buildings, enclosing a little cobble-stoned courtyard with a central garden and a fine large lawn at the back. In the

chapel, otherwise uninteresting, is the monument of the founder ; removed in 1696, together with his body, from the then ruined and roofless church of St. Mary at Dover Castle, where he had been Constable. His life-sized, white marble kneeling figure, with the Garter on his left leg, looks stately and dignified in the chancel. It is indeed among the best works of that notable sculptor, Nicholas Stone. Other portions of the monument, in fragments at the west end of the building, show signs of having at some time been long exposed to the weather. The figures are rather speculative, and may be either a galaxy of Virtues and Graces, or wife and children.

Trinity Hospital is overhung and pitifully dwarfed by the great electric power-house of the London County Council's electric tramways, whose chimneys rise to a height of nearly 300 feet. They are typical of the great change that has come over Greenwich in modern times, tending towards degrading it to a mere indistinguishable part of London. Fortunately, it possesses too many beautiful natural features to become ever quite that.

But no longer is Greenwich dignified by the ministerial whitebait dinners that were once held at the "Ship." These once famous entertainments that generally marked the close of the parliamentary summer session originated in a casual way, about 1798, when the commissioners of Dagenham Breach invited Pitt to be a guest at their annual fish dinner at Dagenham. The

occasion was successful enough to be repeated, and the scene was eventually changed to a tavern, sometimes at Blackwall and sometimes at Greenwich. By this time the annual feast had developed into a Tory ministerial event, and proved so useful in the strengthening of party ties that the Whigs, when in office, adopted the custom.

The Greenwich ministerial whitebait dinners, held either at the "Ship," the "Crown and Sceptre," or the "Trafalgar," were formerly accompanied by something of what, in less exalted circles, we should style the showy "beanfeast" element; for the Royal and Admiralty barges, gay with bunting, conveyed the guests to the scene of jollity, and back. Only the concertinas were lacking. The function was first broken during the Gladstonian administration of 1868-74. In that last year, with the triumph of the Conservatives, Disraeli revived it, but the excursion was made by steamer instead of by barge. And so it continued, through the next Liberal term of office, until 1883, when it was again discontinued; to be revived on only one occasion since, in 1894, during the short-lived administration of Lord Rosebery.

Not only Ministers of the Crown resorted to Greenwich for whitebait dinners: they were long popular with Londoners in general; but now that the swiftest of communication with London is obtainable, this most easily perishable of fish is just as readily to be had there, and Greenwich has suffered in consequence. Whitebait, supposed

by some to be a distinct species of fish, and declared by others to be merely the small fry of herring, are caught between Blackwall and Greenwich, said to be the only waters in which they are found.

All the way from Greenwich to Woolwich, a matter of three miles, run the electric trams ; the river going in a bold loop almost due north, along Blackwall Reach. A fine, broad, new road runs across the dreary flats to the Blackwall Tunnel ; and all along these once solitary levels great modern factories are springing up. The explorer will not get much joy of going that way ; nor indeed will he find much by going ahead into Woolwich, for the mean things that fringe about the skirts of a great city are abundantly evident.

Woolwich looks imposing from the river, with its crowded houses backed by the wooded heights of Charlton and Shooter's Hill, but it is disappointing on close acquaintance. Its streets, of the narrowest, described to the present writer by a contemptuous attendant at the Free Ferry as "not wide enough to wheel a bassinette," are old without being either ancient or picturesque, and although they own such attractive names as "Nile" and "Nelson" Streets, "Bellwater Gate," and "Market Hill," are grim and repellent. The parish church, in midst of these unlovely surroundings, is exactly in keeping : a grim, eighteenth-century affair of dull stock brick, like a factory. Many of the crowded tombstones around it were removed in 1894. Among them was one to a certain

Emmanuel Skipper, who died in 1842, whose epitaph concluded :

“ As I am now, so will you be,
Therefore, prepare to follow me.”

To which some one, apparently a stone-worker engaged in the churchyard, added in very neat lettering :

“ To follow you I’m not intent,
Till first I know which way you went.”

North Woolwich, whose name will be found by the diligent student of maps, on the opposite shore, is not, as might reasonably be supposed from its situation, in Essex, but is a portion of the county of Kent. There are, of course, many instances throughout England of detached portions of shires and counties islanded in others, but perhaps none so oddly arbitrary as this, where a broad river separates the two portions. Rarely ever do we find an altogether satisfactory explanation of these peculiarities. In the present instance it is held to be owing to the ancient local manorial possessions of Count Haimo, Sheriff of Kent in the reign of William the Conqueror, lying on either side of the Thames, and that, therefore, the smaller portion of his holding was included in that county in which his greater interests lay. It is an ingenious, if not altogether convincing theory.

Woolwich is associated with one of the most terrible shipwrecks of modern times. A good

many years have passed since the wreck of the pleasure-steamer *Princess Alice* thrilled London, but there are many yet living who remember the occasion. The *Princess Alice* plied frequently in the summer between London and Gravesend, and was generally crowded. She was exceptionally well filled on that fatal day, September 3rd, 1878. More than eight hundred people were aboard. London trippers are proverbially jolly, and those who in those days made holiday at Gravesend and Rosherville were folk of exuberant spirits. Music and dancing occupied the attention of the holiday folk on the return voyage, and all went well until after passing Gallions Reach and rounding Tripcock's Tree Point. Night had fallen upon the broad and busy river, and coming swiftly down-stream appeared the lights of a large screw-steamer, the *Bywell Castle* collier. The captains of both vessels were taken by surprise, and both lost their presence of mind, with the result that the *Bywell Castle* struck the *Princess Alice* immediately forward of her engine-room, and cut her in two. In less than four minutes the *Princess Alice* had sunk, and 670 persons were drowned. Some few, with the exercise of much agility, jumped aboard the collier at the moment of the collision, but many were women and children, and many more were in the saloon, and were caught there, as in a trap.

It was finally decided in litigation that the *Princess Alice* was alone to blame for the disaster. Some of the drowned were buried in Woolwich

Cemetery, where a monument stands, erected by a "national sixpenny subscription" contributed by over 23,000 subscribers. Around it are long lines of small stones, marking where the dead lie. The inscription on the monument gives figures considerably at variance from those given in books of reference. It states: "It was computed that seven hundred men, women, and children were on board. Of these about 550 were drowned. One hundred and twenty were buried near this place."

This melancholy spot is situated on the one-time pleasant hill-side above Plumstead, between Woolwich and Abbey Wood; close to where Bostal Woods still look down from their craggy heights upon the wide-spreading marshes of Plumstead and Erith. This was once an exceedingly delightful escarpment, densely clothed with noble woods and vigorous undergrowth, stretching away to Erith, but the suburban expansion of London is spoiling it. Cemeteries—the abodes of the dead—and little mean streets of houses, scar the once rustic hill-sides, and along the road that goes to Erith, down in the levels, the electric trams run swiftly. But the place-names are still fragrant: Abbey Wood, Picardy, Belmont, and Belvedere; and indeed the great Abbey Wood is still very much more than a name.

Here is Lesnes Abbey Farm, whose 260 acres comprises 200 acres of woodland. The lands, now and for long past the property of Christ's College, are of much romantic and antiquarian

interest, for here was situated the Abbey of Westwood, or Lesnes, founded in 1178 for Augustinian Canons by Richard de Lucy, Lord Chief Justiciar of England, and at one time protector of the realm. The founder died within a year, and was buried in his abbey church. For 347 years the Abbey of Lesnes continued in existence, and was then suppressed by Cardinal Wolsey, in 1525, and its revenues seized for the purposes of his educational endowments. The Abbey ruins and lands passed in succession to a number of owners.

So long ago as 1752 the buildings had become a mere heap of rubbish, with little remaining above ground, and that greatly overgrown with trees. Excavations were then made and numerous monuments were discovered, but they appear to have been all covered up again; and not until 1910 was the site again explored. Work was then undertaken by the Woolwich Antiquarian Society, and some highly interesting remains have been unearthed. There, close by the modern farmhouse, deep down in pits dug in the accumulated soil, you see the bases of pillars of the Lady Chapel and the Chapter House, with floors of encaustic tiles; and there, too, are five Purbeck or Bethersden marble coffin-lids of the abbots and brethren of this vanished Abbey. One, bearing a shepherd's crook, is that of Abbot Elyas, while another, on which the word "medicina" may be clearly traced, is obviously that of a brother who acted as doctor. A museum of relics has been established in a room of the farmhouse. Chief

among these was the life-size, cross-legged effigy of a knight in chain-mail, supposed to represent one of the De Lucy family, about 1301; the shield on his arm bearing the "flower-de-luce." The colours and gilding are still perfect. This interesting relic has now been removed to the South Kensington Museum.

The name of Belvedere is curiously un-English, but the village is sufficiently British, with a very ordinary "Belvedere" railway station. The origin of the place takes us back to early in the eighteenth century, when a mansion of that name was built on the wooded hill-top, in a pleasant park whence the estuary of the Thames and its crowded shipping could be seen. Hence "Belvedere," a word deriving from the Italian, *bello vedere*, a pleasant view. Look-out towers commanding fine prospects, and known as "belvederes," or sometimes as "follies," are familiar objects all over the country, in ancestral parks. This mansion of Belvedere was rebuilt in a "classic" style, in red brick, about 1764, by Lord Eardley. A still wider view is obtained from a prospect-tower in the grounds. The park was greatly cut up for building purposes in 1859, and the village of Belvedere then sprang up. The mansion itself was purchased for £12,000 and opened in 1867 as a home for old sailors: the Royal Alfred Institution for Aged Merchant Seamen.

Any expectation of beauty in the village, or wretched forlorn settlement, of Belvedere that fringes the road to Erith would be doomed to

disappointment, and Erith, which succeeds it, is simply beastly : there is no other fitting word for the place nowadays. "Aer-hythe," whence the place-name is said to derive, is considered to mean the "old port," and a picturesquely dilapidated old place it remained until recent years, with a quaintly ramshackle old wooden jetty projecting into the Thames, and a curious wood-and-glass house at the head of it. Coal was leisurely landed here, in a way that was, by comparison with the present methods, altogether amateurish. Nowadays the street of Erith is mean and squalid, and filthy coal-yards and busy power-houses, together with a network of railway-lines, occupy the shore. Modern industrial conditions have rendered Erith a place eminently desirable to leave unvisited. Nor do the marshes and low-lying fields beyond it, towards the mouth of the river Darent, reward the explorer, whose only course is now to turn inland and so come, past the hamlet of Perry Street, through Crayford and along the Dover Road, into Dartford town.

Dartford does not greatly concern us here, because, for one thing, it is not upon the coast, and, for another, it belongs to quite a different subject, the DOVER ROAD ; and in a book on that highway I have described the town at some length.

It is a matter of some two miles from the town, more or less beside the river Darent, across the low-lying and sometimes marshy meadows, to the Thames-side. You pass the scattered hamlet of

Joyce's Green and evidences of gunpowder works ; and, nearing the Thames, there opens before you a view of Long Reach, with the smallpox hospital-ships, and on the Essex shore the very striking picture of Purfleet, a busy little place, nestling at the foot of its bold, chalky hill. A place very little, yet very busy and grimy when you come closely into touch with it, is " Portflete " —thus to style it by its older name.

CHAPTER III

STONE—GREENHITHE—NORTHFLEET—HUGGENS'S
COLLEGE — ROSHERVILLE — GRAVESEND —
SHORNEMead—CLIFFE—COOLING—THE HUN-
DRED OF HOO—THE ISLE OF GRAIN—HOO ST.
WERBURGH—UPNOR CASTLE—STROOD

RISING steeply out of Dartford, we come by the Dover Road, the ancient Watling Street, up to the lofty plateau of Dartford Brent ; here taking the left-hand fork where the road branches. To the right goes the Watling Street, the Roman road, our left-hand route conducting gradually past Stone to the waterside at Greenhithe. Industrial England is prominent on the way, greatly to the disadvantage of the older England of romance. The thoughtful man asks himself, on passing the huge City of London Lunatic Asylum at Stone, and coming into a region of chalk-pits and cement-works, whither we are tending.

Here, where the hill-sides are being cut away for sake of the chalk, and where lofty chimneys send forth clouds of smoke, stands the lovely Early English church of Stone, built, it is thought, by the designers and craftsmen who created Westminster Abbey. The clustered shafts of the

nave-arcade, and the general decoration of the interior, bear a marked resemblance. The exceptional elaboration of this parish church is due to the offerings of pilgrims on their way to and from the shrine of St. William of Perth at Rochester. The church stood beside the road, and thus came in for the pilgrims' alms. The modern pilgrim will only note that this church, begun on this beautiful and costly scale, was completed on a minor note. This is due to a falling-off of those wayfarers' gifts.

Greenhithe sits beside the river, in a queer little byway. From it sailed away into the northern ice and an obscure death, Sir John Franklin and his crews of the Arctic expedition, on board the *Erebus* and *Terror*, 1845. Many an one must, since then, have reflected upon the peculiarly ominous names of those ships.

Greenhithe is just a quaint, waterside street of houses running parallel with the Thames, with shops of a kind which give you the impression that they are kept by people who never expect to sell anything, and that they, in fact, never *do* sell anything; that they would resent the very suggestion of a sale, and are a kind of shop-keeping anchorites, who keep shop in fulfilment of vows to deny purchasers the satisfaction of making purchases. Though, I honestly declare, I have never seen any article in Greenhithe shop-windows in the least desirable by any reasonable person. Almost the oldest house in this queerest of queer streets is one which bears the initials and date :

E.
I. M
1693

I believe it must have been only a little later than this period when some of the goods exposed to view in these windows were added to stock.

In the broad reach off Greenhithe and Northfleet are anchored the training-ships *Arethusa*,



INGRESS ABBEY.

Warspite, and *Worcester*; and at the eastward end of this street, which leads to nowhere in particular, you come suddenly upon the handsome mansion of Ingress Abbey, built about 1834 by Alderman Harmer, then proprietor of the *Weekly Dispatch*. It was built from the stones of old London Bridge, which had been pulled down two years earlier. Sweetly pretty, almost noble, must the Alderman's lordly mansion have looked, in its lovely waterside park, rich in noble trees. So,

indeed, it does even yet, although the house has been long empty, and although it and the park are about to be abolished for the building of a huge wall-paper manufactory. The entire neighbourhood, in fact, is being thoroughly commercialised, and rendered a fuming, striving horror of machinery and belching factory-chimneys. Enterprising people have even plans for factory-building on that projecting spit of desolation between Greenhithe and Northfleet, known as Swanscombe marshes ; while as for Northfleet, that old-time village has become a sprawling place of much squalor.

The chief feature of the long street is the rather striking group formed by the dwellings and the chapel of Huggens's College, in grounds secluded behind a lofty wall. In the years 1844-7 the amiable John Huggens, a city merchant, founded and endowed this college, as almshouses for the benefit of gentlemen reduced to poor circumstances ; and here forty of these collegians, with their wives and one woman relative, reside and enjoy an annuity of £52 apiece, and live, like all pensioners, to the most preposterous and incredible ages, much to the disgust of those in the waiting list. Over the archway leading into the grounds is a statue of the admirable Huggens, seated and habited in a tightly buttoned-up frock-coat. He seems to be seeking inspiration in the skies, and holds a roll of papers in his right hand, while the left appears to be groping in something that resembles a coal-scuttle. The

street at this corner is quaintly named—in allusion to Huggens, no doubt—"Samaritan Grove."

Here we are again on the DOVER ROAD, with modern developments of electric tramways leading on through Rosherville to Gravesend. Let us, as soon as may be, turn off to the left from the dust and the traffic, and seek the waterside at Rosherville Pier. The famous gardens created in the great chalk-pit by the enterprising Jeremiah Rosher, 1830-35, were for many years the scene of Cockney jollity and the wildest of high-jinks; all thought very daring by the early Victorians who indulged in them. "Rosherville, Where to Spend a Happy Day": that was the legend. You made excursion by steamer from London and indulged in tea and shrimps—"s'rimps" in the Cockney tongue, you comprehend—taken in ear-wiggy arbours in gardens decorated with plaster statues; and possibly took part in some dancing, later on, under the illuminated trees. These things, considered awfully wild then, we look back upon with disgust for their mingled slowness and vulgarity.

Of late years Rosherville Gardens have had but a precarious existence. Now you find them closed, and then they are reopened for a space, and again they are closed once more. The place that Rosher created outside his moribund gardens—this Rosherville—is a grim and grisly spot, with gaunt, would-be stately stucco-fronted mansions and a vast hotel, empty. A melancholy Parade or Terrace faces the river, and a broad road leads up

from it to the Garden entrance, on whose gate-piers are great gilded sphinxes: the whole presenting, even its prime, an awful aspect of Egyptian mysticism, qualified, it is true, by plaster, but still not, you know, ever of a gay and gladsome kind. Children, involuntary partakers of those "Happy Days," were appalled by these surroundings, and usually howled with dismay at sight of those gate-piers, refusing to be comforted at the explanation that the awful beasts on them were only "spinkses." Many an unhappy child dreamt horribly afterwards of being pursued by spinks.

The mile-long walk along the shore from Rosherville to Gravesend affords much food for reflection. Here you notice for the first time that the water is salt; obviously sea-water, because the wooden piles are hung with sea-weed. At this time of writing the "Marine Baths" that once were well patronised are being demolished, after a long period of disuse and decay. They fronted upon this parade, in a forbidding, Pharaonic type of architecture that gave to bathing an aspect of partaking in the dread rites of the ancient Egyptian worship of Osiris and all that weird hierarchy of bird-and-beast-headed gods and goddesses. Sea-bathing at Gravesend is a thing of the past, and on the site of these baths the commercial spirit of the age is rearing vast factory-buildings. Thus ends Gravesend's Early Victorian dream of being a seaside resort; but one would not declare that the place is the

less interesting. It is, indeed, of a greater interest than ever, and the busy waterway presents a grand panorama of the might and majesty of modern shipping. For there, on the opposite shore, are Tilbury Docks, to and from whose capacious basins come and go the great liners and cargo boats. There, too, glimpsed across the half-mile of waterway, is Tilbury Fort, where modern and unhistorical batteries stand in company with that old historic blockhouse where



TILBURY FORT.

Queen Elizabeth reviewed her troops before the threatened arrival of the Spanish Armada.

The chief feature—ornament it can scarce be styled—of Gravesend's river-front is the Royal Terrace Pier. It is a construction for use rather than display, and is in fact the headquarters of the sea and river pilots who, to the number of nearly 300, wait here and navigate vessels up and down river to and from London, or out to sea by the "North Channel," as far as the Sunk

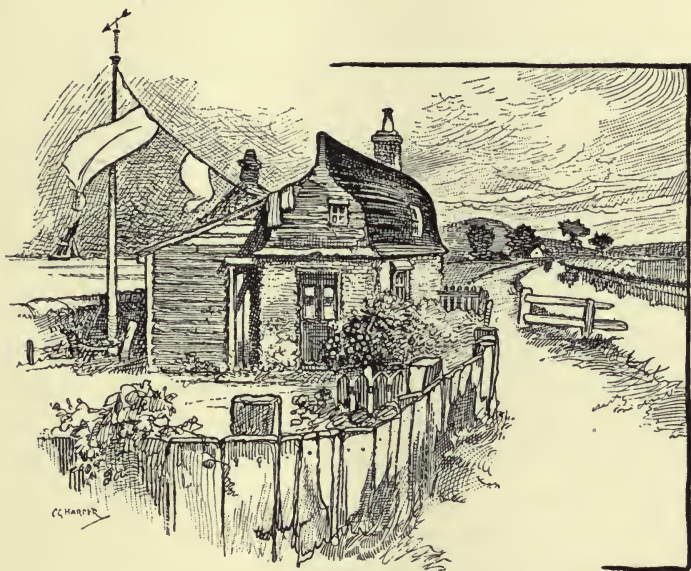
Lightship, off Harwich; or by the "South Channel," as far as Dungeness. At the head of these men is an official of "the Trinity House," with the title of "Ruler." The "Ruler of the Pilots" settles all official business and disputes that are not serious enough to be referred to the Trinity House headquarters on Tower Hill.

"Gravesend" is not a pleasant name, even though it may suggest to the imaginative the final triumph of the Christian: "O grave, where is thy sting? O Death, where is thy victory?" with visions of the shining Beyond. But the place-name has not, in fact, anything to do with these considerations or speculations; and refers to some prehistoric trench which in the dim past formed a boundary-line between neighbouring tribes.

Leaving Gravesend, you come down again to the shore by turning to the left out of the main road by the tramway terminus and through the unlovely region of "Coal Road," past the "Canal Tavern," and over the Thames and Medway Canal by a footbridge. Here, along the water-side, is the office of a person described on his sign-board as an "Explosive Lighterman." The place where this alarming creature carries on business is Denton Wharf. Adjoining is the "Ship and Lobster" tavern. Out in front stretches the Thames estuary. It is the spot referred to by Dickens in "Great Expectations," Chapter LIV., in which Pip is engaged in smuggling the convict, Magwitch, out of the country. The building seen

in the distance, by the waterside, is Shornemead Battery.

It is a curious region : the deserted Thames and Medway Canal on the right, the busy Thames on the left ; and it is rendered yet more curious by the whimsical old cottage presently seen, standing



CURIOUS OLD BOAT-COTTAGE AT CHALK.

in the narrow space between canal and river ; an odd, amphibious building, the lower part brick, the upper portion made of an old man-o'-war's barge, placed keel upwards. It is almost exactly such another as Peggotty's boat-house on Yarmouth sands, imagined and described by Dickens in "David Copperfield." The old *Wellington*

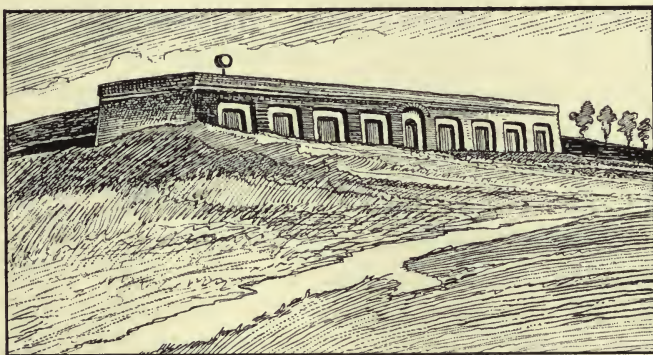
man-o'-war's boat was sold out of the service about 1822, and the cottage has been here since then ; obviously, therefore, it must have been well known to Dickens, whose honeymoon days were passed at the neighbouring village of Chalk in 1836. "David Copperfield" was not written until 1850, so it is plain he must have had this queer old place in mind.

It is true that the Peggotty home is described as being in its natural position, keel downwards, and that this old boat of the *Wellington* man-o'-war is upside down, and forms both roof and upper floor of the cottage ; but these are mere matter-of-fact details easily surmounted in a work of fiction.

In all these years these stout timbers have served to shelter the present occupant and his father, and if the occasional tarring they receive is not forgotten, they bid fair to last many generations longer. The upper floor is divided into two bedrooms, and you "come aboard" into them from the brick-walled lower story up a very maritime-looking hatchway. The interior is very quaint, showing the ribs, and, in fact, the whole construction of the boat, while the bedroom, which has the additional advantage of a window cut in the stern, quite realises David Copperfield's view of the bedroom in the Peggotty establishment, as "the completest and most desirable bedroom ever seen."

The melancholy shore-line may be followed as far as Shornemead Battery, a heavy masonry

fort designed in modern times for the protection of the Thames, its design discredited by later military engineers. Worse discredit is cast upon the design of Cliffe Creek Battery, a mile and a half lower down, and the fort near Coalhouse Point, on the opposite shore, whose fire, it appears, would enfilade one another and do more damage to friends than enemies. Shornemead is the *ultima thule* of the riverside explorer here. It



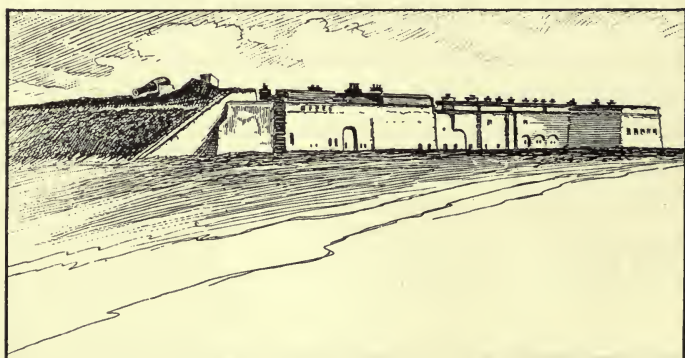
SHORNEMEAD BATTERY.

is alike unpleasant and unprofitable, if not actually impossible, to proceed farther. The point now to be aimed at is Cliffe, and that village is reached by retracing the shoreward path and crossing the railway and canal and then taking the road on left which leads to Chequers Street, near Higham Station, and on past Cliffe station.

The village of Cliffe, as might be expected, stands high, on a kind of upland whence the ground breaks rapidly away to Cliffe Creek,

remarkable for nothing but cement-works, a coastguard station, and mud. Always mud. At low water, mud thick and slab ; at high water, mud in solution. Cliffe is otherwise called " Cliffe-at-Hoo," and is the " Clofeshoch," or " Cloveshoo," (*i.e.* " Cliff's Height ") of early Anglo-Saxon synods, long held here annually. They were established by Archbishop Theodore in the seventh century.

Beyond Cliffe we come by a winding road into Cooling, or Cowling, whose name means " cow pasture." In advance of the few and scattered houses forming the village is that romantic old building, Cooling Castle gatehouse, almost all that now remains of the fortress built here towards the close of the fourteenth century by Sir John de Cobham, the third Baron Cobham. The work occupied six years, and was the cause of much excited comment among the peasantry. Those were the times of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw and



CLIFFE BATTERY.

the peasants' rebellion—threatening times, when it behoved even great nobles to go warily ; and so Lord Cobham sought means to avoid criticism and the muttered threats to pull his castle down about his ears. He did this by letting it be understood that his stronghold was built, not for the purpose of overawing the mob, but in view of foreign invasion, and he put his intent on record by placing on one of the gatehouse towers the curious inscription on enamelled copper plates which still remains in its original position. It is designed to resemble a legal document, or charter, and runs thus :

“ Knowyth that beth and schul be
That I am mad in help of the cuntre
In knowyng of whyche thyng
Thys is chartre and wytnessyng.”

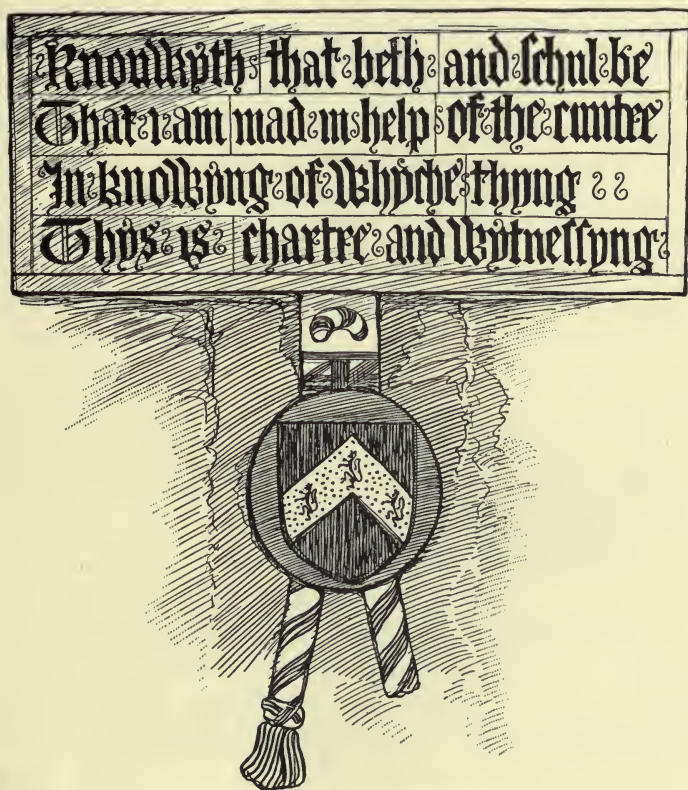


COOLING CASTLE.

The curious word "beth" we may read as "be-eth," *i.e.* "it is"; or, as a rustic might say, even to this day, "it be." These words are enamelled in black on a white ground. Below them, on a seal, are Lord Cobham's arms: gules, on a chevron or, three lions rampant sable. He died in 1408, at a very great age; about ninety-five. His granddaughter, Joan, married, as her fourth husband, Sir John Oldcastle, the "good Lord Cobham," friend of Henry the Fifth and of Wycliffe. He became a religious reformer and friend of the Lollards, and thus incurred the enmity of the Church; churchmen then, as now, and at all times, being eager in heresy-hunting. He was cited to appear before Archbishop Arundel, but when the apparitor appeared he shut himself up behind these formidable walls and defied the citation. But eventually he was brought to trial in London. He denied the doctrine of the Real Presence, and in the disputes with the bench of bishops declared the Pope was Antichrist, the prelates his members, and the friars his tail. He was condemned to be burnt, and although he escaped and wandered about the country nearly four years, he met a martyr's fate at Christmas 1417, when he was hanged, and burnt hanging. Thus ended the "good Lord Cobham," one of the earliest victims of a bloodstained Church without pity or remorse.

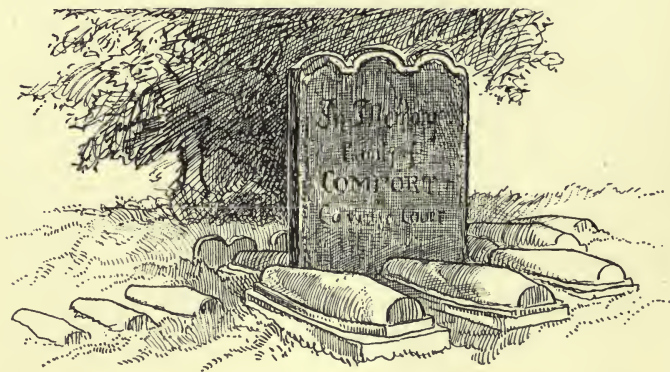
Of the castle little remains except the gatehouse towers with their bold machicolations, the moat, and the crypt of the Great Chamber. A modern house has been built in the enclosure.

Cooling is in midst of the grim fenland associated with Dickens's story, “ Great Expectations,” and in fact is the scene of the opening chapter, in which Pip meets the dreadful convict, Magwitch, at night, in the churchyard. According to the story, the district of “ the Meshes ” is “ a most beastly place. Mudbank, mist, swamp, and work,” and it is, truly, dreariness itself in winter or in



THE “ CHARTER,” COOLING CASTLE.

bad weather. Dickens, of course, stage-managing his story, which opens on a "raw afternoon towards evening," made the most of these unpleasant surroundings; and those atmospheric conditions, in Cooling churchyard and in company with the grisly row of graves of the Comport family, just to the south of the church-tower, would be sufficient to dishearten any one. Pip, looking out upon "the dark, flat wilderness beyond the churchyard," began to cry; and no wonder, for he is represented among the tombs of his father and mother, Peter Pirrip and his wife, and of his five brothers. The Comport tombs, which formed the originals for Dickens's idea of the Pirrip family, actually number ten in a line, with three more behind, and are presided over by a headstone bearing the inscription, "Comport of Cowling Court, 1779." They are of the most odious and gruesome shape, roughly cylindrical and widening at the shoulders,



GRAVES OF THE COMPORT FAMILY, COOLING: "LIKE CHRYSALIDS."

suggestive of coffins and mummified bodies, and plastered with grey cement over brick. To the imaginative mind, they strikingly resemble so many human chrysalids, awaiting the day when they shall be hatched out as cherubim.

This is a kind of country that responds magically to sunshine, and, given a fine day, the marshes that stretch away for two miles down to the river form a beautiful picture, inviting to exploration. But it is better to keep along the road that goes winding away through High Halstow, Hoo St. Mary, and Allhallows, than to attempt reaching the shore at Egypt Bay, where the convict hulks used to be stationed, and where a coastguard station now stands. Only the most devious and primitive tracks lead that way, and the marshes that look so beautiful in the distant view, grey-green and golden in the sunshine, are commonplace enough on close acquaintance.

At High Halstow we come into the Hundred of Hoo and into the centre of this little-visited region, projecting, out of the beaten track of everyday commerce, between the outlets of the Thames and Medway. "Hoo" signifies a height, and is often found spelt "hoe" in place-names. "The Hoe" at Plymouth is in the nature of a cliff-top. The quaint sound of the word sometimes leads to misunderstandings, as we see by the following newspaper account of some proceedings at the Gravesend Police Court, March 13th, 1914.

Solicitor: Where do you live?

Witness : Hoo.

Solicitor : You.

Witness : Hoo, sir.

Solicitor : You, I mean ; you yourself.

Witness : Hoo.

Solicitor : Oh ! at Hoo ?

Witness : Yes, sir.

Following the road on to Hoo St. Mary, where the large church stands prominently ringed about with trees, the remote little village of Allhallows is reached, rather over half a mile from the shore. Here is an ancient church, with little western bellcote instead of a tower. Turning to left here, along a very bad track, the waterside will be reached at Allhallows Fort, a modern masonry work at the spot called " Bell's Hard," looking across to Southend, some four miles away. Southend from this point looks almost as red and yellow, and the sea, under favourable conditions, as blue, as the places pictured on the familiar advertisements of the railway companies. " Almost," you will observe, not quite ! There is nothing on earth really so gorgeous as those. But Southend, from these muddy shores, on a glorious day in July wears the likeness of some Celestial City or New Jerusalem.

In the peaceful times which until recently prevailed the only apparent inhabitant of Allhallows Fort was usually one soldier of the Royal Garrison Artillery, whose chief pre-occupation seemed to be the potatoes, cabbages, and beans of a garden at the rear. A mile or

so eastward is the muddy Yantlet Creek, which separates the Hundred of Hoo and the Isle of Grain. At the mouth of it, besides a coastguard station, is the obelisk called "London Stone," marking the limits of the Lord Mayor of London's jurisdiction as Conservator of the Thames.

The only way to reach the Isle of Grain is to return through Allhallows and proceed to Lower Stoke, a hamlet at the cross-roads, occupying as it were a strategic position midway between a number of extremely small, so-called "villages." They have nothing in the nature of a shop, and thus the "General Stores" at Lower Stoke fulfils the enviable position of a central emporium. At Lower Stoke, turning left, we come along a marsh road, bordered with deep ditches, across a narrow bridge, into the Isle of Grain, with the railway to Port Victoria running companionably alongside. Port Victoria is glimpsed a mile or so away on the right : all you see of it, across the marshes, being the big funnels of the steamships, some huge oil-tanks, and the great lonely bulk of an hotel. There is no special feature in the Isle of Grain, whose name, by the way, has nothing to

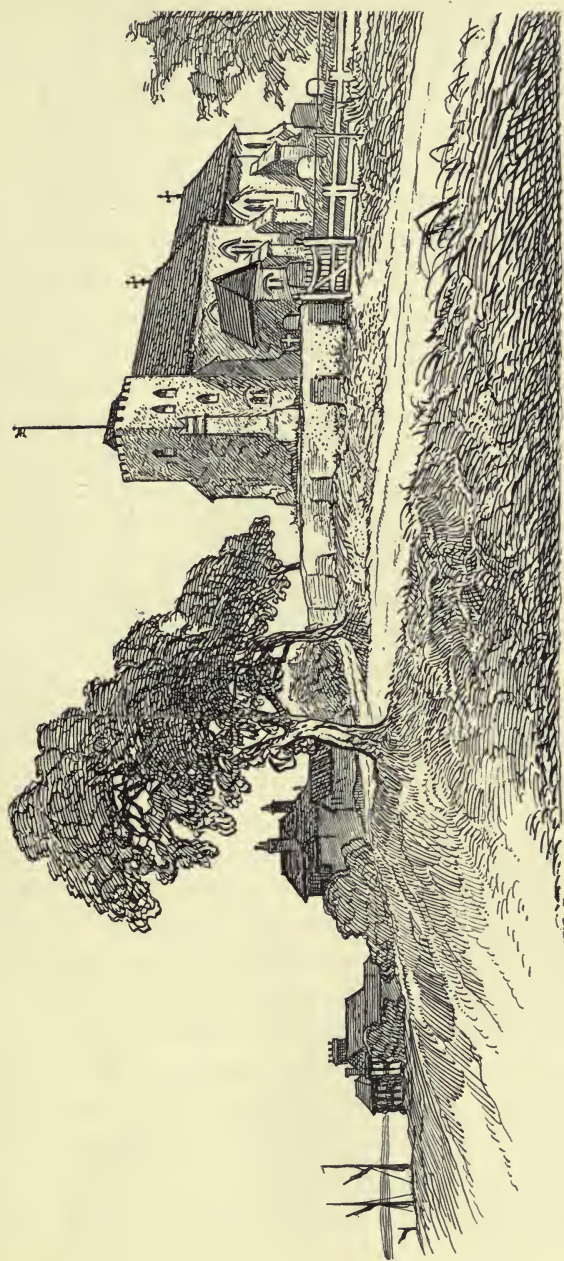


STOKE.

do with corn or wheat. It is cognate with the word "groin," and means a projecting piece of land. Near the shore, overlooking the mouth of the Thames, Southend, and Nore Lightship on one hand, and the Medway and Sheerness on the other, is the village of Grain and the recently restored church, for a number of years little better than a ruin. Here, too, is Fort Grain, with the newly-built naval seaplane station.

Retracing the road to Lower Stoke and turning to left at the cross-roads, we come through Stoke village, with its Early English church and scattered houses set amidst vast flat fields. On the left stretch Stoke saltings, accessible only by water, and frequented only by wild-fowling sportsmen, who thread the oozy channels in their flat-bottomed punts. Along these many salt marshes on either side of the Medway the wild-fowl abound. At a spot oddly called "Beluncle," where the single-track railway to Port Victoria crosses the road, the vast new sheds and other evidences of the Kingsnorth Medway Airship Base have recently arisen in the open fields. You will seek in vain for "Kingsnorth" on maps, for it is an entirely new name.

Reaching Hoo St. Werburgh, we find a considerable village and an old church with weather-beaten tower and an interesting interior containing, sculptured on one of its pillars, an example of those ancient grotesques which puzzle the modern wayfarer, and seem to him purposeless. They generally, however, represent the Divine



ST. JAMES GRAIN.

gifts either of sight, hearing, or speech, and their grotesque character is often accidental, rather than a matter of intention. This particular example, a monkish head, with left hand approaching the mouth, appears to typify the Gift of Speech ; but to a casual observer it might very well be an attempt to portray the horror of some unfortunate person who had accidentally taken poison.

From Hoo St. Werburgh, across Hoo Common and past the hamlet of Wainscot, we come to the turning for Upnor Castle, which lies to the left ; paradoxically enough, it would seem, down a village street of the narrowest, steepest, and most rugged description. Surely, thinks the stranger, one should ascend to Upnor. But "Upnor," which means "up-shore," refers, not to a height, but to the upper reaches of the Medway estuary.

The castle is a rambling, grey-walled fortress with a series of rugged, cylindrical towers facing the waters of the Medway and looking over to the Chatham Dockyard Extension. Upnor was built in the time of Queen Elizabeth, as a defence of Chatham and Rochester, and seems to have justified itself in the reign of Charles the Second, during that inglorious war of 1667, when the insolent Dutch with sixty vessels took the fort at Sheerness, sailed up the Medway, burning and destroying, and later ascending the Thames to Tilbury Fort, humbled the ancient pride of the Mistress of the Seas. A chain was stretched across the Medway, from Hoo Ness to Folly Point, to bar the passage

of the enemy to Chatham, and the men-o'-war *Matthias*, *Monmouth*, and *Royal Charles* stood by, to help repulse De Ruyter's forces. But the feeblest attempts were made: the Dutch broke the chain, burnt the ships, and continued up-river, capturing the *Royal Charles*, which was taken by two boats, under the command of one Captain Tobiaz, without any attempt at defence. Next morning, with the purpose of burning the large men-o'-war at anchor above Upnor, the Dutch sent up two of their fighting ships, with six fire-vessels, under cover of a heavy cannonade. Here Upnor Castle was of some service, and considerably hampered the enemy's operations; but the fireships succeeded in burning the *Royal James*, *Loyal London*, and *Royal Oak*. And then, half-hearted themselves, the invaders retreated. It was well for us they were so cautious, for they might have done what they would. The observers of that time were not indifferent to this indignity. Evelyn, in his diary, styles it "as dreadful a spectacle as Englishmen ever saw, and a dishonour never to be wiped off"; and Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, was divided in three parts about it. He shared the general shame of the nation; he feared, as an official who might be held personally responsible, and thought dolefully of either being committed to the Tower, or else having his throat cut by a furious mob; and he dreaded, as a citizen, the dangers of an invasion affecting his property and ready cash.

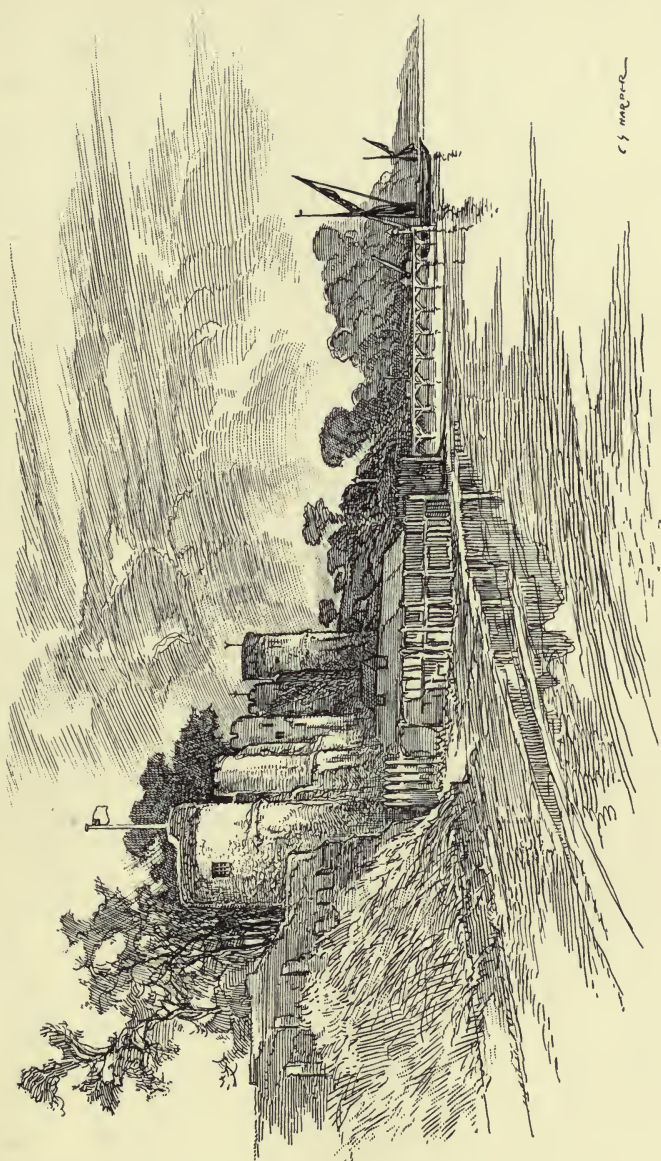
Opposite Upnor the naval activities of the

dockyard are very noticeable. There you see battleships and cruisers dry-docked and refitting. When last I was here the waterside loungers readily told me their names. As to the correct rendering of one there was considerable variation, for while one would have it, "Airy-ale-house," giving a pleasant mental picture of a hedgerow tavern of the type which would have pleased Piscator and Venator, others preferred to style her the "You're-a-lias," and some made it "You-rile-us," which gives a distinctly threatening *nemo me impune lacessit* kind of braggadocio turn to her proper title, *Euryalus*. There are other versions of the name—"Airy," or "Hairy Alice," for example—which prove the risks of classic nomenclature.

Upnor Castle is not nowadays a strong place, but the long stretch of foreshore between it and the waterside, down-river, is occupied by great naval powder-magazines, and a pier for the Government light railway running at the rear is a feature. The castle has a certain picturesqueness, and is worth sketching; but the sketcher, selecting the best view-point by the riverside, is soon made aware that he has become an object of interest to the Metropolitan Police on watch within, and presently finds himself plied with amiable inquiries; these being times when espionage is very much to the front.

The inquisitive stranger having thus attracted the attention of the police, and having—let us hope—duly satisfied them, may now make his

of masonry



UPNOR CASTLE.

way up the steep street again, and, reaching the cross-roads, soon come into Frindsbury. From this village, with its hilltop church, whose spire is a prominent landmark, a descent is immediately made into the tramway-infested streets and congested areas of Strood; and from Strood the Medway is at once crossed, into Rochester.

CHAPTER IV

ROCHESTER AND CHATHAM—BROMPTON—GILLING-
HAM — GRANGE — OTTERHAM QUAY — LOWER
HALSTOW—IWADE

VERY little change overtakes Rochester High Street, that narrow, rather gloomy, and distinctly dirty-looking thoroughfare. The Corn Exchange clock still projects its "moon face" over the pavement, as Dickens described it, "out of a grave, red building, as if Time carried on business there and hung out his sign"; and the ancient grime still clings to the brickwork houses, and the occasional old weather-boarded tenements still lack the new coats of paint cruelly denied them. One might expend much description upon the High Street of Rochester, from the famous "Bull" hotel of Pickwickian fame, and the tame, characterless front of the "Seven Poor Travellers," on to the curiously weatherboarded Westgate of the Cathedral Close, familiarly known, through associations with "Edwin Drood," as "Jasper's Gateway," and not forgetting the Early English crypt beneath the "George" inn, nearly opposite the "Bull," a relic of which very few people know, and little to be suspected from the decidedly

commonplace general appearance of that house. There is, indeed, room for a most interesting monograph upon this High Street. I always associate the little weatherboarded house and shop numbered 195, on the left hand as you go towards Chatham, with that where little David Copperfield had his adventure with the half-mad second-hand-clothes shopkeeper who said "Goroo, goroo," and invoked his lungs and liver. It is a bootshop nowadays; but you go down into it from the street-level just as in the story.

Eastbury House—the "Nuns' House" of "Edwin Drood"—until recent years a gloomy mansion, mysteriously retired behind a grim brick wall, has lately been restored and the enclosing wall demolished, and has become a museum. It is now a much more worshipful-looking building than before; all the better for its scouring and cleaning, and yet looking none the less antique. Built in 1591, Eastgate House looks every year of its age, and has a very thorough air of historical mystery, although nothing has ever happened there to which one can put a name. Miss Twinkleton's young ladies, in "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," must often have experienced strange thrills and shivers in its darkling rooms and passages.

The allied towns of Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, and New Brompton do not grow any more attractive, from the tourist's point of view, with the effluxion of time. They had always a taint of Cockney vulgarity which later industrial

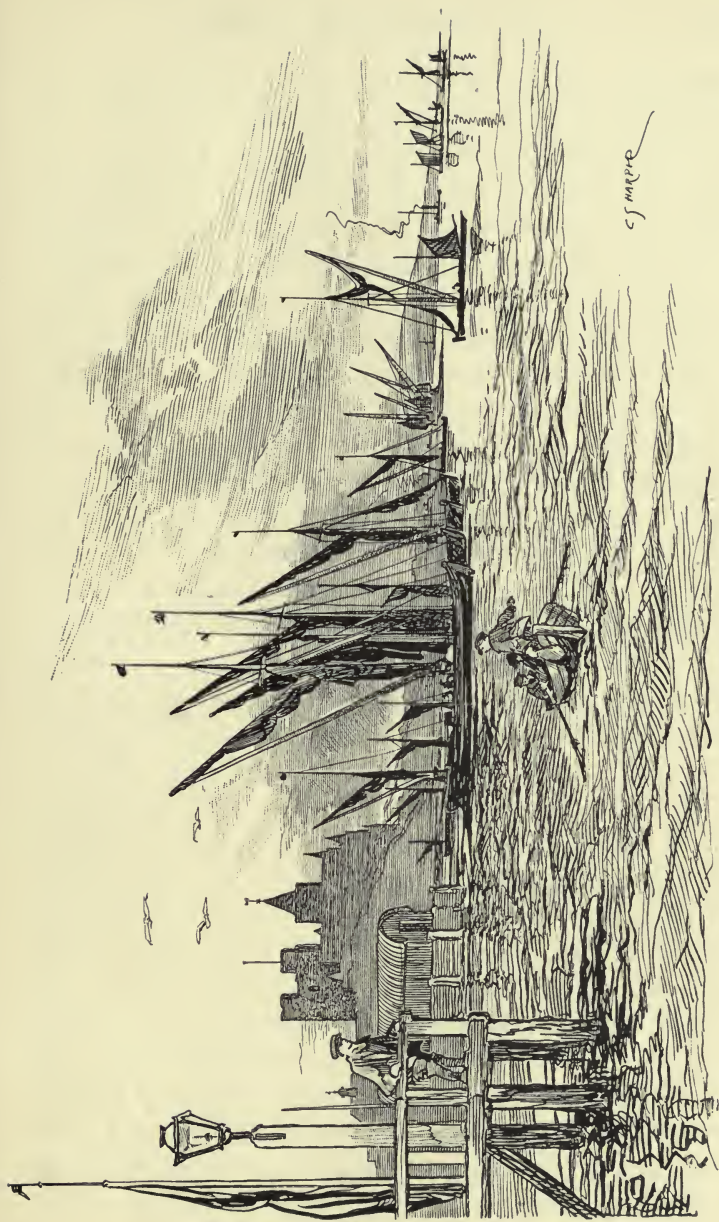
and military and naval developments, and an extensive system of electric tramways, have intensified. With all these things, the natural beauties of the site have been almost utterly obscured in mean streets and crowded slums. Those beauties were of a very striking nature. From the lofty side of Chatham Hill the eye ranged over the broad Medway and its marshes, beautiful in the distance, and across to the Hundred of Hoo. To-day that view is qualified by a vista of innumerable roofs and domestic chimneys, and by the many giant chimney-stacks of the Portland cement factories that have to-day become almost as striking a feature of the surroundings as the naval and military establishments, and spread a smoky haze over the scene.

It is not easy to realise Chatham as a waterside place, still less as a port and dockyard, because of the closely-packed houses along the High Street which runs parallel with the Medway. Only the narrowest alleys open to the water, and few of them: the Sun Pier being, in fact, the only view-point. But the outlook upon the busy waterside scenes up-river, along Limehouse Reach, is of an inspiring nature. It is composed, indeed, of widely different elements, but is therefore all the more pictorial. There you see Rochester Castle and Cathedral, contrasting strongly with the huge coal-cranes and the wharves, alongside with the fuming chimneys of the cement factories on the Frindsbury shore, and many picturesque, brown-sailed barges and fussy steam-tugs on the

water. The strenuous past, and a much more strenuous present, lend imagination, as well as pictorial quality, to the scene.

The name of Limehouse Reach is exactly descriptive, for the cement factories on the Frindsbury shore give it a character. Here, and above Rochester Bridge, the pleasant Medway valley is scarred and seamed with the chalk-quarrying and the mud-dredging that go towards the making of Portland cement, this neighbourhood being one of the chief centres of that industry. The chalk and the river-mud are mixed roughly in the proportion of three parts of chalk to one of mud, and are then burnt in kilns and ground into a flour-like powder. Portland cement, invented about 1826, is an important industry, with an output of over 3,000,000 tons a year in this country. The price per cask was originally 21s., but the output is now so large and the production has so improved that a better article is now sold at about 4s. a cask.

As to Chatham Dockyard, it is a highly historic place full of keenest interest to a patriotic Briton, but to such a good deal more difficult to explore properly than it is made for distinguished foreigners. Why the native tax-payer who contributes to the support of this establishment so much of his hardly-earned gold should be thus discouraged, while possible enemies—much more keenly concerned to worm out official secrets and far better able to do so—should be shown every particular is more than the plain man can com-



THE MEDWAY: ROCHESTER CASTLE AND CATHEDRAL.

prehend. But it is the same tale in all our places of arms.

Among the interesting things here in the nature of relics none is more keenly absorbing than the figure-head of the American frigate *Chesapeake*, the vessel captured by Captain Broke, in command of the *Shannon*, in 1813. This naval duel was the brightest incident in the three years' war between England and the United States. The figure-head, a fine specimen of this extinct art, represents a woman with headdress of feathers in the North American Indian fashion.

It is past the Dockyard gates and by High Street, Brompton, and thence across "Chatham Great Lines" that the stranger who wants to find again the coast-line had better trace his course. The district is an unalluring one of tramways, mean streets, and the squalid side of military life. But the Brompton Barracks of the Royal Engineers are rather fine. Here is the Gordon statue, a striking work, representing the General seated on a camel; and here, too, are two triumphal arches displaying the achievements of the Royal Engineers, and four huge bronzes, representing seated Boers with rifles and bandoliers. The "Great Lines," an upland, common-like expanse, is the scene of that incident in "Pickwick" in which, during the grand review, the timid Mr. Snodgrass, after being violently hustled to and fro, was indignantly asked "vere he vos a-shovin' to," together with many other shameful experiences.

Following the tram-lines, we come at last to the terminus at Gillingham, one of the two places of that name in England. The other is in Dorset. Although their names are spelt alike, they are spoken differently: the Dorsetshire town is "Gillingham," as might be expected: this is, unexpectedly, always locally "Jillingham."

The ancient church here has a tall tower, conspicuous far and wide on its hill-top; its corner-



THE MEDWAY: HOO FORTS.

turret provided with a cresset, or fire-pot, for a beacon. Here, descending the steep and narrow Church Street, and bearing to the right, a hamlet called Gad's Hill is passed, giving on to a variety of creeks and inlets looking out across the Medway and the circular forts of Gillingham and Hoo, with the wooded heights of the Hundred of Hoo beyond.

By taking the next turning on the right, up a commonplace new street called "King Edward Road," and then turning left, a large country residence on the right hand will presently be seen.

This is the manor of Grange, or Grench, formerly a member of the Cinque Port of Hastings, and a separate parish. Some ancient, ivy-clad ruins in front of the modern house are those of a chapel and a barn built in 1378 by Sir John Philipot, Mayor of London. Not really "Lord" Mayor, strictly speaking, for that dignified title is not known to have been given before 1486.

The manor comprised 120 acres, and was held by the service of finding one ship and two armed men in time of war. Philipot, however, did better than this. His patriotism impelled him to provide 1,000 men and a squadron of vessels, to aid against the French. This ancient manor enjoyed until modern times the singular extra-territorial right of affording shelter to fugitives from justice who escaped thither; and criminals who succeeded in reaching this Alsatia could not be arrested on the warrant of the local magistrates until a confirming warrant had been obtained from Hastings.

Proceeding and passing a railed-in redoubt, the road rises. Turning then to left and again to right, we come down beside the estuary of the Medway, amid the pear and cherry orchards, into Lower Rainham, past Otterham Creek, and on to Upchurch. Here the church has a steeple of fantastic ugliness, resembling two wooden extinguishers placed one above another. There is a curious crypt, or bonehouse, under the north chancel aisle. This district is famous for the many finds of Roman pottery in the Medway



UPCHURCH.

creeks : the well-known black “Upchurch ware,” generally discovered by punting in the shallow waters and prodding the mud with rods. It is supposed that an extensive industry was seated here in ancient times, on land now more or less submerged. It is now pretty generally supposed (why it should be I know not) that all the finds possible have been made. Hasted, writing of these parts early in the eighteenth century, says “the noxious vapours arising from the marshes subject the inhabitants to continued intermittents, and shorten their lives at a very early period.” This, at any rate, seems to be of the past.

Passing Upchurch, the creek of Lower Halstow is soon seen, with the church away on the left, amid scenes of brick-making activity. The road in the next half-mile turns sharply right at Park-sore, rising steeply ; that going straight ahead

to a place marked " Funton " on the map, rapidly becoming impassable.

Cresting the hill, a wonderful distant view over across to Sheerness, disclosing the battleships there, like uncanny monsters of fairy-lore, is obtained. Bending right and then left, and passing a moated farm, and then a gate across the road, we come in another mile to cross-roads and there turn left for Iwade, and through the village to the bridge across the Swale into Sheppey, at Kings-ferry.

CHAPTER V

SHEPPEY

IT was in the Swale that Augustine baptized King Ethelbert on Whit Sunday, June 2nd, A.D. 596, and thus made him a child of God. On Christmas Day the following year he similarly baptized 10,000 of the King's subjects, but exactly where these chilly ceremonies took place is not recorded. In any case, if the Swale were as muddy then as it is now, the converts must have come out extremely dirty.



LOWER HALSTOW.

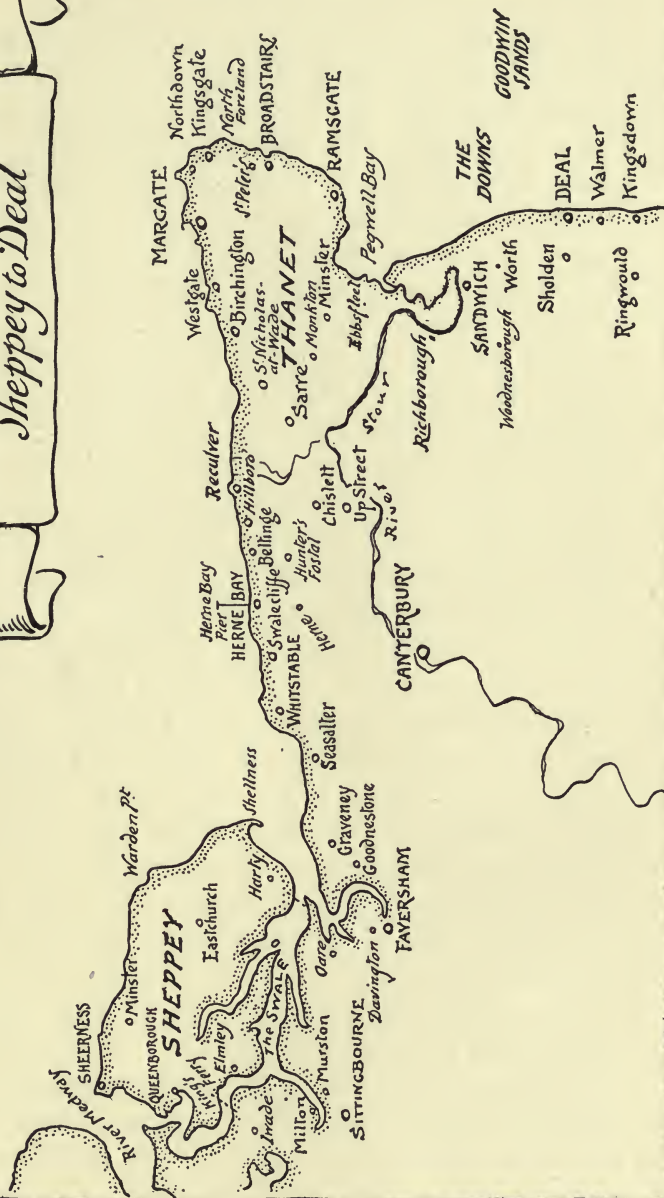
The one and only way into Sheppey without ferrying into it is across the Kingsferry Bridge, which here spans the Swale, and is an electrically worked swing-bridge of the South-Eastern and Chatham Railway. It is also a road-bridge. Sometimes a week will pass before it is required to be opened to allow a sailing-vessel to pass. The charge for crossing varies from a modest penny for cyclist or pedestrian, up to one shilling and sixpence for a motor-car.

It has for such a long time past been the almost universal custom to speak or write of the "Isle of Sheppey" that it becomes a convenience to follow the popular way; but really the name "Sheppey" includes the designation "island"; being the modern form of the Saxon name for it, "Sceapige," the "sheep island." It is said that the Romans knew it as *Insula Ovium*, the Isle of Sheep; and certainly it has remained through all the succeeding ages a place where flocks have been kept and have flourished. In this connection William Camden gives us some interesting facts relating to Sheppey in his day:

"This Isle of Sheepe, whereof it feedeth mightie great flockes, was called by our auncestours Shepey—that is the Isle of Sheepe." He then proceeds to speak of the "fatte-tailed sheepe, of exceeding great size, whose flesh is most delicate to taste. I have seen younge lads, taking women's function, with stools fastened untoe their buttockes to milke, yea, and to make cheese of ewes milke."

THE KENTISH COAST

Sheppey to Deal



Centuries ago this industry disappeared, and although the Roquefort cheeses we nowadays import from France in great quantities are similar and popular products, nothing of the kind is now made in Sheppey, or anywhere in England.

The "fat-tailed sheep" will nowadays be sought in vain in Sheppey. There are many of the ordinary breeds, but, on the honour of a traveller, none of that type.

This intimate, yet in some ways remote, island off the Kentish mainland is but eleven miles in length by five broad, and would thus seem to afford little scope for variety; but within this small compass is found scenery of very varied description, ranging from the wide-spreading marshes beside the Swale to a high ridge or backbone, on whose highest point stands the village of Minster-in-Sheppey. A peculiar feature of the low, marshy part of the island is found in the ancient mounds known as "cottesels," usually said to be burial-places of the Danes; they are large and irregular grassy hillocks, which may more probably be the spoil from olden drainage-trenches. Thus heaped up, they formed, either by accident or intention, refuges for sheep in time of floods. Two of these are seen on the way from Kingsferry.

The chief town of the island, the dockyard town and port of Sheerness, is six miles from Kingsferry. On the way to it you pass near Queenborough, originally "Kingborough," but renamed by Edward the Third in honour of

Queen Philippa, when a fortress was also built. Of that castle, in whose design that distinguished Bishop, William of Wykeham, had a hand, nothing now remains, and the railway station, which stands on the site of it, although no doubt a more useful institution nowadays, frankly makes no attempt at romance. Queenborough is now a rather plaintive-looking town of one broad street, devastated by the gruesome odour, resembling putrid meat, emanating from extensive and diabolically prosperous chemical-manure works. It will thus be judged that Queenborough is an excellent place not to visit. The church itself contains nothing of interest except a battered and illiterate brass on the wall, to one "Henry Knight, sometime maior of this Towne, who was Master of a ship to Greenland, and Harpined there 24 Veiages.

"In Greenland I Whales, Sea horse and Beares did slay,
Though now my bodie is in tombe, in Clay."

Nor is Sheerness precisely a joyous holiday resort. It is a place of strength, guarding the entrance to the Thames and Medway, and will have to stand in the forefront of any attack; but exactly wherein its strength resides is not at all apparent to the layman. No doubt booms and floating mines, although not spectacular defences, would play a foremost part. The history of this congeries of four towns—Blue Town, Marine Town, Banks Town, and Mile Town—that con-

stitute Sheerness is not a glorious one. The site was a swamp until reclamation was begun under James the First. Continued in the next reign, and through the Commonwealth, the Admiralty in the time of Charles the Second selected this as the site for a dockyard and fortifications to protect Sheppey from invasion. Pepys tells us, under date of August 18th, 1665, how "we," the King and others, "walked up and down, laying out the ground to be taken in for a yard to lay provisions for cleaning and repairing of ships, and a most proper place it is for the purpose."

On February 27th, 1667, the King and the Duke of York were at Sheerness to lay out the design for the fortifications, which, four months later, were destroyed by the Dutch.

An odd survival, found where least expected, remains here. Few who walk the planks of the Cornwallis Jetty realise that they are laid over the forgotten hull of the old man-o'-war *Cornwallis*, seventy-four guns, which figured in the Navy a hundred years ago. Down beneath remains the dim interior of that wooden line-of-battle ship, with the original portholes.

For the rest, Sheerness to-day is sheerly and frankly ugly, and Cockney, and quite unashamed. The look of it is as though long lengths of the Old Kent Road and the dullest, dreariest purlieus of Camberwell had come down to the sea and forgotten to return. Let us, then, leaving it behind, hasten along the shore, past the obsolete Barton's Fort and the hideous brick-and-iron



MINSTER-IN-SHEPPEY.

railed Admiralty range-finders that form abominable eyesores on the beach, and make for Minster. To reach that hill-top village, the woebegone attempted developments of a building-estate styled "Minster-on-Sea," a place without shape or form, are passed; but, these things left behind, the unspoiled country of Sheppey is entered. The "monasterium," whence Minster derives its name, was the ancient Priory of St. Saxburga, founded in early Saxon times. The square gatehouse of the nunnery, standing by the church, is all that remains of that religious house, and even this building, fashioned of the most amazing admixture

of brick, stone, and flint has been wholly secularised and converted into a dwelling-house.

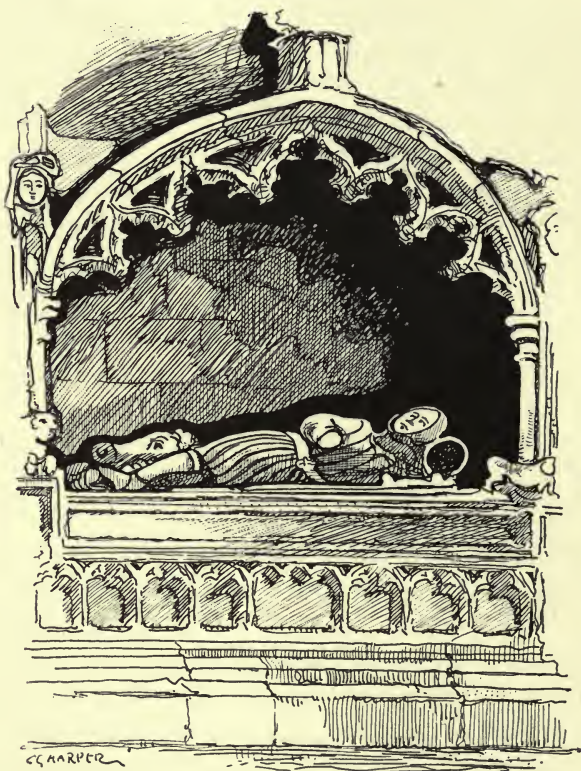
The church is intrinsically interesting for its architecture, its monuments, and its brasses, including the very fine and early brasses of Sir John de Northwode—that knight who, according to the irreverent Ingoldsby, received a black eye from a brickbat at the siege of Shurland Castle—and his wife, Joan, about 1320 ; but it is far more so as a literary landmark. It is, of course, closely associated with that most engaging among the “Ingoldsby Legends,” the story of “Grey Dolphin,” one of the most genuinely humorous things in literature, which bears reading over and over again, and will remain fresh when the marks of many a later funny fellow have been forgotten. Sir Robert de Shurland, the hero of that story, was a real flesh-and-blood person, who flourished in the thirteenth century and was a very earnest, strenuous, and warlike knight—not at all a farcical person. He went out in the Crusade of 1271, and at a later date was knighted for gallantry at the siege of Caerlaverock. The ladies, it would seem, liked this doughty character. “If I were a young demoiselle,” says an old metrical romance, “I would give myself to that brave knight, Sir Robert de Shurland.”

In the church is the singular tomb of this warrior, with a recumbent effigy not in the least resembling the portrait drawn of him by Ingoldsby, for he is shown to be tall and thin, not short and stockish. Otherwise, the description is exact;

and it is indeed the effigy of a "warrior clad in the chain-mail of the thirteenth century. His hands are clasped in prayer"—or they would be, had not the arms been shorn off at the elbows—"his legs, crossed in that position so prized by Templars in ancient and tailors in modern days, bespeak him a Soldier of the Faith in Palestine. Close beside his dexter calf lies sculptured in bold relief a horse's head." Ingoldsby, you see, together with the antiquaries of his time, thought the cross-legged effigies on ancient tombs invariably indicated that the person represented had been a Crusader. It has since been proved to demonstration that this was not the case, and that this curious pose was only a convention of the age. The horse's head is shown rising from some strange carving intended to represent waves, and is an allusion to the grant of "wreck of the sea" which the knight had obtained where his manors extended to the shore. This was ordinarily a privilege of the Crown. It gave him property in all wreckage, waifs and strays, and flotsam and jetsam which he could reach with the point of his lance when riding as far as possible into the sea at ebb-tide.

Margaret Shurland, daughter and heiress of this personage, married one William Cheyney. The altar-tomb of their descendant, Sir Thomas Cheyney, Warden of the Cinque Ports in the time of Queen Elizabeth, stands in the church and is a noble monument. He was a remarkable man, for he filled important offices of State in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, Mary, and

Elizabeth, and in all the tragic changes of those changeful times lost neither head, fortune, nor repute. He was Knight of the Garter, Constable of Dover Castle, a Privy Councillor, and Treasurer of the Household. A man of wealth, he demolished the old castle of Shurland and built in its stead the mansion yet standing, long used as a farmhouse.

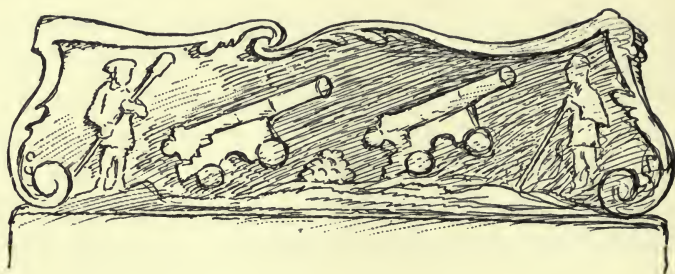


TOMB OF SIR ROBERT DE SHURLAND, MINSTER-IN-SHEPPEY CHURCH.

Among the other monuments in Minster church is an alabaster effigy sometimes considered to be that of one Jeronimo Magno, a Spanish prisoner of war captured by Drake off Calais Harbour in Armada time. For three years this unhappy hidalgo was kept prisoner aboard ship at the Nore, and then death ended his trials, in 1591. Later criticism, however, identifies the chain worn by the effigy as that of the Yorkist faction: the chain of Suns and Roses, worn by adherents of Edward the Fourth and the House of York; which would date back the monument by some seventy years and thus dispose of the Spanish prisoner theory.

Another very interesting effigy is that of one Jordanus de Scapeia, found in 1833 in the churchyard, buried five feet deep. The clasped mailed hands hold a little mystic oval at the tips of the fingers, bearing a tiny effigy intended to typify the soul.

Out in Minster churchyard on sunny days of wandering breezes the guns of the distant forts and battle-ships that guard the coast are heard to roar and mutter and rumble, according to their distance, and above the peaked roof of the church tower twirls the odd horse-head weather-vane which gives the local name, the "Horse Church." Here are many stones to the memory of Sheerness dockyard men; among them one with quaint and weatherworn sculpture and curious verses to one Henry Worth, a gunner, who died in 1770, aged fifty-seven:



“ Pallida Mors æquo pede pauperum Tabernas Regumque Turres.

Who e'er thou art, if here by Wisdom led
 To view the silent mansions of the Dead
 And search for truth from life's last mournful page
 Where Malice lives not, nor where Slanders rage,
 Read on. No Bombast swells these friendly lines ;
 Here truth unhonour'd & unvarnish'd shines.
 Where o'er yon sod an envious nettle creeps,
 From care escap'd an honest Gunner sleeps.
 As on he travell'd to life's sorrowing end,
 Distress for ever claim'd him as a friend ;
 Orphan & Widow were alike his care ;
 He gave with pleasure all he had to spare.
 His match now burnt, expended all his priming,
 He left the world, and us, without e'er whining,
 Deep in the earth his Carcase is entomb'd,
 Which Love & Grog for him had honeycomb'd.
 Jeeting apart, Retir'd from winds & Weather,
 Virtue & WORTH are laid asleep together.”

Leaving this memorial to the charitable and love-worn Worth and his grog-blossoms, we trace the road towards Eastchurch. Along to the

left, folded between the hills and sheltered from the winds, are vales where elms and beeches thrive luxuriantly. Such a spot is the ravine of Scrapsgate, very like the "chines" of the Isle of Wight, a charming spot in spring, where one may always be sure of finding violets, primroses, and bluebells in their season.

Scrapsgate was the scene of a mysterious tragedy many years ago. It has long since been forgotten, and the only reminder of it now to be found is a weather-worn tombstone in the obscure churchyard of the workhouse at Minster, with the following inscription :

" O, earth
cover not my blood !
Sacred
to the memory of
a man unknown, who was
found murdered on the
morning of the 22nd April 1814
near Scraps Gate in this parish, by
his Head being nearly severed from his body
A subscription
was immediately entered into and
one hundred guineas reward
offered on conviction of the
perpetrators of the
horrible act, but they remain at
present undiscovered."

The perpetrators were never discovered. "Mysterious" I have described this affair, but it was pretty widely understood at the time

that the stranger had met his fate at the hands of the smugglers who then found Scrapsgate a convenient spot for their shy trade. His identity and occupation alike remained unestablished, but the supposition was then current that he was either a member of a smuggling band who had turned informer and had been discovered in his treachery, or that he was one of the revenue officers. The ferocity of the smugglers who infested the coasts of Kent stuck at nothing, and this was by no means an exceptional outrage, as the history of their desperate doings sufficiently proves.

A complete and weird contrast from this lovely vale is Warden Point, which lies off to the left of the way to Eastchurch, along two and a quarter miles of solitary winding road. "At Warden Point," I read in a geological work, "is the finest exposure of the London clay." And it may be added that, in the many landslips which have occurred here of late years, other things have been exposed. In short, the slipping away of the cliffs has torn asunder the churchyard of Warden, with the shocking result that the coffins and skeletons of the dead are strewn about. You come to this Golgotha at a point where the road, making straight for the cliffs' edge, has been carefully barred, lest the stranger should descend into the sea and there perish. To the few cottages that stand here, all that is left of the village of Warden, has been given the unlovely name of "Mud Row." Forming part of

the garden fence of one of these is a sculptured stone tablet recording that Delamark Banks, son of Sir Edward Banks, the contractor for the rebuilding of London Bridge, gave some of the stones of old London Bridge to rebuild Warden church, in 1836; the ancient church having been destroyed by encroachment of the sea. By 1870 the sea had further advanced and the new church was closed, being demolished in 1877, when the bodies of those who had been buried in the churchyard during the last thirty years were removed to Minster. Now all that remains of the churches of Warden is this dedication tablet, part of a garden fence. Looking down here, across the yawning rifts and crevasses of the land-ship, you see the poor exposed relics of the dead in the olden churchyard, and out to sea the waters are discoloured with the washings of the clay.

Eastchurch, a pretty village with a charming and well-kept old church, is a pleasant place, associated recently with aviation and the Naval Flying grounds. It is thus appropriate enough that a new stained-glass window should have been placed here in 1912 to the memory of Charles Stuart Rolls and Cecil Grace, who both lost their lives in flying.

Among other memorials is a tablet to Vice-Admiral Sir Richard King, Bart., Commander-in-Chief at the Nore, who, having commanded the *Achille* at Trafalgar and come scatheless through that action, died of cholera at Sheerness,

aged 61. Here, too, is an elaborate monument to Gabriel Livesey, who died at Eastchurch parsonage in 1622. His stately recumbent effigy, under a canopy of coloured and gilded marbles, has in front of it a group of children; among them the kneeling figure of his son Michael, afterwards notorious as one of the Commissioners who tried Charles the First and signed his death-warrant.

Close beside Eastchurch the striking group of Shurland Castle is prominent. This is the embattled manor-house already referred to, built on the site of Sir Robert de Shurland's stronghold. The building is most imposing from the front, but it puts all its goods in the shop-window, so to say, for it is just a long, shallow house, with nothing of interest within; and all the vast original ranges of buildings in the rear have been demolished. It is, in fact, a farmhouse, and it and the farm, in spite of the old Sheppey proverb, "Sheppey grass none can surpass," have been unlet for about twenty years. Although the interior is commonplace itself, the front is fine, in good red brick, with vitrified brick in diamond patterns, and moulded brick chimneys. Among the paving-stones leading up to the entrance is an Early English floriated stone coffin-lid, of some beauty.

Down from Eastchurch, we come out of the "hill country" of Sheppey, along a beautiful avenue of overarching trees, to the Harty Road station of the Sheppey Light Railway, and thence along the levels to Leysdown and the long, flat

shell-beach of Shellness, with the pink-washed coastguard buildings at the extreme end, looking across the Swale to Whitstable. History has been made at Shellness. It was on December 11th, 1688, that James the Second fled, panic-stricken, from his palace of Whitehall, before the advance of the Prince of Orange, who had been proclaimed King in his stead in the market-place of Newton



HARTY CHURCH : FAVERSHAM IN THE DISTANCE

Abbot, on November 7th, by the title of William the Third. The fugitive sovereign, with a wig of unaccustomed modest cut and semi-clerical clothes for disguise, made his hasty exit in company with Sir Edward Hales, a Roman Catholic pervert whom he had recently appointed Master of the Ordnance, Lieutenant of the Tower, and Privy Councillor. This facile person brought with him a gentleman named Sheldon and a Mr.

Abbadie, who occupied the position of Page of the Backstairs. If you do but consider a moment, there is something exquisitely appropriate and humorous in a Page of the Backstairs taking part in such a fugitive back-door departure. A librettist in comic opera could have thought of no happier touch.

One is curious to know how it was that King James came to select such a difficult, out-of-the-way place as Sheppey for his departure. He, of course, sought some obscure point for embarkation, but there were easily dozens of sufficiently quiet and unfrequented places suited to his purpose, without taking this extreme trouble. The explanation is that the King was really at this time almost beside himself, and his mind was so disordered that he could not think coherently nor plan anything. Hales was the master at this juncture. He was the owner of property in Sheppey, and had a steward, one Bannister by name, whom he could trust, at his house of Neat's Court, Minster. The steward was instructed to hire a vessel at Elmley, and did so, and some of the party went aboard there and others were to be picked up here, at Shellness, whence it was hoped to make a passage for France. The hoy was on the point of departure, when Bannister's livery was noticed by the fishermen. It was a livery well known locally, and little liked since Hales had rendered himself so obnoxious to the Protestants. The spectacle, therefore, of Bannister assisting a company of strange gentlefolk



LATE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CHEST, OF GERMAN ORIGIN, CARVED WITH REPRESENTATION OF A TOURNAMENT,
HARTY CHURCH.

to embark from so unaccustomed a place, at such an untimely hour, in those times of social, political, and religious disturbance, and in a craft so humble, was one to excite curiosity and suspicion. The fishermen assembled to the number of fifty or sixty on the beach, soon recognised Hales, and, that once done, there was no escaping. They surrounded the fugitives, and prevented them by force from leaving.

We shall meet this party again, on the mainland, on the way to Faversham; ourselves tracking laboriously round the coastline, to Harty, which was once in the nature of an island, divided from Sheppey by Cable Fleet and Crog Dick; but these have long been dry.

There are more imposing coastwise walks than this: there cannot well be many duller. Imagine the dun-coloured waters of the Swale, bordered all the way by a continuous grassy embankment, raised to protect the land from being drowned; and further imagine this protective bank carefully winding along the configuration of the shore, so that you progress with painful slowness: there you have the route from Shellness to Harty.

Harty consists of a solitary farm, close by the little church. There is no village, and almost the only other house is the "Ferry Inn" by the water-side, half a mile away. In the church remains a curious and highly dilapidated old chest 4 feet 6 inches long, its front carved with a spirited scene representing two knights tilting. One of

them is seen on the point of being unhorsed by his opponent's lance. The tilting-saddles, with long shields for the riders' legs, are noticeable. The chest is of German origin, and dates from the close of the fourteenth century. The reason of it being here is unknown, but one may venture the opinion that it is one of the spoils of shipwreck.

From the "Ferry Inn" at Harty, across the unlovely Swale, it is a half-mile passage, a long and laborious business for an oarsman.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPTURE OF JAMES THE SECOND—FAVERSHAM.

IT is two miles from this side of Harty Ferry to Faversham, through Oare and Davington. Hard by the landing-place the sinuous and muddy Faversham Creek joins the Swale, and ugly sheds stand here and there on the ill-favoured banks, exhibiting minatory notices for the observance of would-be trespassers. I don't think any ordinarily sane person fully informed of what those sheds contain would in the least desire to trespass, for they are, in fact, stored with dynamite, the making of which, together with brewing and the manufacture of paper and bricks, forms an industry actively followed in the neighbourhood of Faversham.

The creeks hereabouts—"cricks" they are called locally—and the marshes, or "meshes" in the speech of Kent, are not scenically beautiful nor in any way spectacular, but the brick-barges, gliding by, do at least give, with their great rusty-red sails, a quaint touch. Scarce a duller spot could be found for the scene of an historic incident, but the incident of James the Second being brought here, a prisoner, was itself drab and unheroic. The fishermen who had seized

the fugitive King on the long low spit of Shellness did not at first know how important was their capture, that cold December day. The humble hoy was a strange vessel for the conveyance of such gentlefolk as these appeared to be, and the fact, in itself, was suspicious in those troubled times; but the fisherfolk's thoughts did not rise to the contemplation of a monarch leaving his kingdom in that evasive way. Probably, if the truth of it were known, their idea of a king was that of a personage splendid in appearance and wearing a crown; certainly it was not this tall, thin-faced man, of mingled careworn and severe expression of countenance, and habited in unrelieved black, who was masquerading as chaplain to Sir Edward Hales, the gentleman who appeared to be the chief among the party they had detained. The fishermen, indeed, took them for escaping Jesuits, and thought the King to be that most notorious of them all, Father Petre. "I know him by his lean jaws," exclaimed one, and another advocated searching "the hatchet-faced old Jesuit," a suggestion acted upon in earnest. They snatched his money and watch—those they could understand and appraise; but his Coronation Ring and a number of little trinkets he carried they left untouched, together with the diamond buckles of his shoes, which they took to be glass. What indignities to offer the Lord's Anointed! Then some person recognised him. It was a great moment, and I wonder no painter has ever made that tableau

the subject of a picture. Perhaps it would have been done had the King presented a better front. Monarchs are by courtesy "gracious," and they are supposed, in addition, to be dignified and courageous ; but this poor James became, under these circumstances, a distressingly mean figure. Why should he at this juncture have proved a coward : he who, when Duke of York and Lord



THE TOWN HALL, FAVERSHAM.

High Admiral, had shown notable courage : he who, three years before, had been contemptuous of the pitiful appeals for mercy made by Monmouth ?

He seems to have made no effort to save himself from these indignities, and was really in abject terror, not perhaps of the fishermen, but of the fate which he supposed awaited him when delivered up to his son-in-law, William the Third.

Bloodthirsty and merciless himself, he imagined others in his own likeness. These apprehensions are evident enough in the incoherent words he used to those ignorant fishermen and oyster-dredgers, and later, at Faversham, in his frantic appeals to be let go. The exulting mob brought him to that town and lodged him at first in the "Queen's Arms" inn, now the "Ship" hotel. News then spreading of these strange things, and of the personal danger in which the King appeared to be placed, the Earl of Winchilsea, a Protestant nobleman, but no revolutionary, hurried over with others from Canterbury to protect him, and removed him to the Mayor's house. There he was kept a prisoner for two days, by rejoicing crowds, who jeered at his terrified appeals: "The Prince of Orange is hunting for my life. If you do not let me fly now," he exclaimed, "it will be too late. My blood will be upon your heads if I fall a martyr."

A troop of Life-guards was sent to bring him back to Rochester, whence he was soon after allowed to escape to France. "There is nothing so much to be wished," William the Third had declared, when the possibility of James fleeing the kingdom had been put before him. Thus, in a truly contemptuous way, he was allowed to depart, and so ended the rule of the House of Stuart. No one in authority had the least desire for his blood; although it is quite certain that his execution would have been extremely popular.

The waterside village of Oare, on the way to Faversham, beside the creek, is one of several places so named, with slightly differing spellings, throughout the country. The name means simply "shore."

The strangely beautiful stone spire of Faversham parish church, a church oddly dedicated to "St. Mary of Charity," piques the curiosity of the stranger from afar. It greatly dignifies distant views of the town, and is especially effective against a stormy or overcast sky, when it shows whitely and boldly. It was built in 1797, and was intended for Gothic architecture, as Gothic was then understood. It is, of course, easy enough to criticise its details, but, taken as a whole, it is an exceedingly fine and effective work, and gives Faversham an individuality that would not be obtained by the ordinary type of tower or spire. There are very few such spires as this, supported on flying ribs of stone, in the country. The others are at King's College, Aberdeen, St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, St. Nicholas, Newcastle, and St. Dunstan-in-the-East, London.

The reality of Faversham is perhaps something of a shock on coming to close quarters, following the invitation of that beckoning spire. There are picturesque and stately corners in this ancient, but still thriving, port, but the corners and purlieus that are by no means pleasant are found along the water-side. There are situated vast heaps of rubbish from London dustbins, brought to these quays by barges, for use in the brick-making that is one of Faversham's principal



FAVERSHAM.

means of livelihood. The great heaps and the barges lying by the quays look picturesque enough in an illustration with the church spire for a background, but the cinders and the dust are distressing when a high wind is blowing.

The interior of Faversham church should be seen to be believed. It is a curious example of the eighteenth-century way with ancient Gothic architecture, and discloses an attempt to convert a Gothic nave into an Ionic interior. The effort was a half-hearted one, for while the columns are in the Ionic style, the Perpendicular clerestory windows remain ; with, however, a fillet of classic ornament around them. The fine large Early English transepts have not been interfered with. On a pillar of the north transept is a twelfth-century fresco representing the Nativity, and in the chancel remains the brass to one William Thornbury, rector and anchorite, 1481.

In the churchyard will be seen this curious epitaph:

WILLIAM LEPINE
of facetious Memory,
Ob. the 11th of March 1778
Æt. 30 Years
Alas

Where be your gibes now ?
Your gambols ? your flashes
of Merriment that were wont
to set the Table in a roar ?

This is, of course, a quotation from *Hamlet*. Lepine, who ended so untimely, was a dissolute and convivial lawyer of Faversham.

CHAPTER VII

MILTON-NEXT-SITTINGBOURNE—SITTINGBOURNE
OLD INNS—MURSTON—LUDDENHAM

A CURIOUS and but-little-visited part of the Kentish littoral is that which stretches, some eight miles or so, between Iwade, Milton, Sittingbourne, Tonge, and Faversham. It is that part of the country, going down to the low-lying shores of the Swale, which was in olden times spoken of as being possessed of "wealth without health." The land was, and is still, wonderfully fertile, but in remote days was full of malaria. To-day, as the traveller by the leisurely South-Eastern Railway passes from Sittingbourne, past Teynham to Faversham, he sees orchards and farmsteads, grazing sheep, and many evidences of prosperity and beauty. It seems to him like a Land of Promise. And truly, once past the squalid papermaking and brickmaking purlieus of Sittingbourne, this is a district of exceptional beauty; by no means flat; and rich in orchards of cherry, apple, and pear.

If we retrace our route from Sheppey, and, coming again across the bridge at King's Ferry, turn off to the left beyond Iwade, we shall pre-

sently come into Milton Regis, otherwise Milton-next-Sittingbourne, past the fine and very striking church, of Norman and Early English periods. It is, in this age of silly "suffies," generally locked, and therefore the tourist finds considerable difficulties in the way of seeing the beautiful interior and the three Northwode brasses: a knight in heraldic tabard; another about 1480; and John Northwode and wife, 1496. But the odd, and



THE CHURCH, MILTON REGIS.

much more humble, tombstone in the churchyard to one "Abraham Washiton late Hvsband of Alise Washinton, now living at Milton, whome had in all six hvsbands," 1601, is easily found. Alice, you will observe, was at that date "now living," and so, for all we know, may have married again; but possibly she may by that time have struck the surviving men of Milton as rather lethal.

Before ever there was a town of Sitting-

bourne there was a town of Milton, standing upon Milton Creek. It was from early times a royal manor, and until ages comparatively recent Sittingbourne, as the lesser place, was best described as "Sittingbourne-next-Milton." But, from being situated directly upon the great Dover Road, Sittingbourne grew, while Milton languished. Great inns sprang up beside that historic highway, to serve the needs of travellers. No less a personage than Henry the Fifth, coming home flushed with the victory of Agincourt in 1415, was entertained at the "Red Lion," a hostelry still in the forefront in 1541, when Henry the Eighth was its guest, and held there one of his fateful Councils, which probably resulted in some one losing his head. The "George," the "Rose," and the "Red Lion" seem to have long been the best inns. Hasted, the historian of Kent, says the "Rose" was the most superb of any in the kingdom; but that must have been at a much later date, for we are not to suppose that those two monarchs stayed at a second-rate house. For the "Red Lion" you will now seek in vain, although there is a "Lion," without any specified colour; a large old inn, with long, seventeenth-century red-brick frontage: twelve windows in a row; quite the largest in the town, although part is now let off as a bank. A quaint, old-world scene presents itself up the archway entrance to the courtyard, with the prettily framed windows of the coffee-room on one side.

The "Rose," once "the most superb," is a

thing of the past, for we cannot affect to believe that the small house which now bears that sign is its modern representative. No: what was once the real "Rose" stands adjoining, and is parcelled into four shops. A tablet on the frontage bears the date 1708, with a rose sculptured in full bloom. The elevation is a handsome



THE TOWN HALL, MILTON REGIS.

two-storied one, with projecting eaves supported by richly carved consoles. A tall window at the side, apparently that of an old assembly-room, runs through two floors.

Opposite is the old "George," red brick, about 1720, with nine windows in a row. The building is in two parts, with two coach-entrances, and must once have been an important inn. Up one entrance is the Liberal Club, and up the other, oddly enough, is the Conservative Club. Along

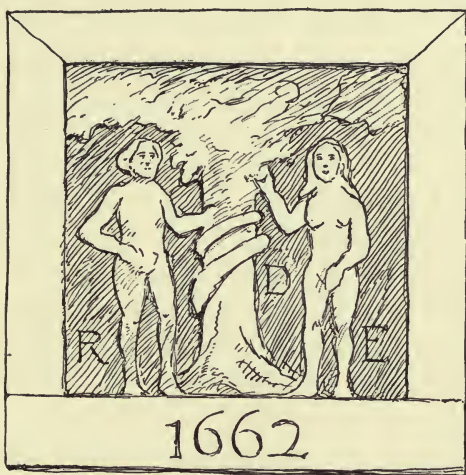
this last, looking back, you see a picturesque tile-hung front, hung with wistaria.

Finally, just past the Wesleyan Chapel is the old "Crown," now a shop. The old coach-yard, very picturesque, has five old postboys' dwellings in timber, now much dilapidated, with broken windows.

But Sittingbourne is not, on the whole, an engaging town, and the bubbling brook, the "seething burn," as the Anglo-Saxons styled it, which gave the place its name, has since 1830 been hidden away from view in a pipe beneath the road. It used to flow across the highway at the east end of the church. The industrial modern circumstances of Sittingbourne, the making of paper and bricks, are the very denial of beauty. Lloyd's paper-mills will be found at Milton. There, on the banks of the muddy Milton Creek, you see mountainous stacks of wood-pulp, for the making of paper. The scene, with the greasy mud-banks and the squalid pieces of wrapping-paper, is inexpressibly ugly. If there is any choice, Milton Creek is even more beastly than the brickmaking village of Murston, below Sittingbourne; and even that is a horror.

But, although Milton is so ill a place, full of lodgings for tramps, and all such mean circumstances, there are yet in its narrow streets some fine old houses, of good architectural character, which hint, not obscurely, that this was, two hundred years ago, a place of charm and gentility. On an old house, now the "Waterman's Arms,"

in Flushing Street, may be seen a quaintly sculptured stone sign dated 1662, representing Adam and Eve standing on either side of that



SIGN OF THE ADAM AND EVE,
MILTON-NEXT-SITTINGBOURNE.

fatal apple-tree: Eve about to pluck the fruit which caused all the trouble. The sign is the arms of the Fruiterers' Company; but the reason of it being here is not known.

It is perhaps worth while to turn aside, on leaving Sittingbourne, to see what manner of place Murston may be. It has already been described in unfavourable terms, but how unutterably wretched a spot this great brickmaking centre is can only be learnt by close inspection. One comes into it by a mile-long road which for the most part stands prominently up above the

surrounding country, something in the likeness of a railway embankment; the brick-earth of which the neighbouring fields once consisted having been dug out to great depths on either side. Down below there, in that artificially low level, the valuable brick-earth having been excavated, many of those fields have once again been given over to agriculture. Crops seem to do well in this curious situation, deriving benefit from what a native described to the present writer as the "mysture, which is apparently Cantise or Cockney for "moisture."

At the end of this singular interval, close to the shores of Milton Creek, is Murston. Whatever beauty the village once possessed has long been obliterated in its expansion into an industrial slum of long, unlovely, characterless streets of human kennels. Even the parish church has been severely dealt with, only the chancel of the old building being left; and that stands in a mangy little walled and locked enclosure, strewn with old tins and other refuse. Such is Murston; and the "brickies" who live in it match the place completely.

It is pleasant to think and to know that Murston is exceptional. Beautiful country, wholly unspoiled, immediately adjoins it, and one comes pleasantly past Tonge, in search of the coast-line, past Chekes Court Farm and Blacketts, to Conyers Quay. There indeed is again an unpleasant interval, for advantage has been taken of a slimy little creek opening out of the Swale

to erect a brick-factory, whence the bricks are barged to Sheerness, and round up the Thames; the barges bringing back from London cargoes of cinders and the contents of London dustbins, which (under the name of "breeze") is useful in the making of bricks. The immediate and intimate part of Conyers Quay is therefore, it will be readily understood, undesirable alike to sight and smell.

The roads of these parts carefully avoid the shore; the one leaving this spot running directly inland, to Teynham, where orchards and hop-gardens and old cottages neighbour the church, in a pretty, diversified landscape. From Teynham, through the hamlet of Deerton Street, one comes to Buckland, where the scanty ruins of an old church stand in front of a farm, on the other side of Buckland crossing. Near by is a humble old timber-framed cottage on the edge



LUDDENHAM.

of hop-gardens. This was originally the parsonage. Beyond it, over Stone level-crossing, a road leads away on the left to Luddenham, a solitary parish on rising ground overlooking the marshes. There is no village, only scattered farms and cottages; but the picture formed by the church on its height, neighboured by the Court Lodge, now the largest of the neighbouring farms, devoted partly to hops and in part to fruit, is an unusual and striking one. There you see the church, partly Early English, with an eighteenth-century red-brick tower, displayed against the skyline in company with some hop-oasts, the hollow in the foreground on the left, evidently once a creek, planted with bush-fruit; while on the right the hop-gardens are screened by a weird hedge of polled poplars, looking very knobbly and knuckly with their annual trimming.

From Luddenham we come steeply uphill and then down, through Davington, again into Faversham.

CHAPTER VIII

GOODNESTONE — GRAVENEY — SEASALTER — WHIT- STABLE AND THE OYSTER FISHERY

THE road from Faversham to Whitstable winds level for long distances, passing at first through a charming district of cherry-orchards, interspersed with emerald pastures, with sheep feeding under the trees, and evidences of much poultry-keeping, in the many coops filled with anxious hens clucking nervously after their young broods. Here, too, you see hop-gardens ; looking more than a little bare in spring, but with plenty of work going on, chiefly in trimming and tarring the ends of the new ash-poles that are to be planted, thick as forests, for the hop-bines to grow upon. Here and there are the hutches in which the hop-pickers will live in August, and now and again you see an oast-house ; the old buildings with their quaint outlines, the new apt to be eye-sorrows for angularity and sheer commonplace ugliness.

It is perhaps best to come this way in the sweet of the year, when the cherry-blossom mantles the trees with purest white, and when there is everywhere an inspiring and heartening air of

anticipation, not only in the preparations going forward in the hop-gardens, but in the great barns where the thousands of cherry-baskets are collecting, awaiting the cherry-picking.

A lovely, lovable corner, this, past Goodnestone on the way to Graveney, and it seems prosperous, too. Moreover, the yellow gravel road is excellent.

The name of Goodnestone is a corruption of "Godwin's Town." It was one of the manors of the great patriot Saxon, Earl Godwin. Graveney stands where the wide-spreading marshes of Seasalter stretch away to the sea. There is little of it, beside the ancient, time-worn church, containing a fine canopied brass to John Martyn and wife, 1436. He was a Judge of the King's Bench. The effigy shows him holding a heart, inscribed "IHV MCY," in his hands.

A stone in the churchyard, not otherwise remarkable, mentions a place with the odd name "Old Wives' Leaze." One naturally wants to know something of these old wives and of their leaze, but disappointment dogs the footsteps of the inquirer, as closely and as constantly as his own shadow. An old man mowing the grass of the churchyard remarks incuriously, on his attention being drawn to it, that he "'spects it's only a name." "What's in a name?" he seems to suggest with Shakespeare. Much sometimes.

Later inquiries prove "Old Wives' Leaze" to be a hamlet high on a hill-top, one mile from

Chilham, some seven miles distant ; but I have no information as to the old wives, nor does any one else appear to possess any. The name, in fact, seems, like so many others, to be a corruption of some forgotten name, and is indeed supposed to have originally been "Overs," or "Oldwoods Leaze," or Lees.

In the marshes of Seasalter the hedgerows die away, leaving the flat road open and unfenced and bordered by watery dykes, in which last year's reeds, rubbing together in the wind, keep up a rustling murmur, looking sere and wan until with the coming of June they are replaced by newer growths. The dykes quarter the marshes in all directions, and keep the pastures efficiently drained, but the sight of men busily engaged in digging thick slab-mud from them proves that they require constant care.

The scenery is that of Holland ; even down to the particular detail of grass-grown earthen embankments against the sea, which long ago encroached here and destroyed the original church of Seasalter, and has in modern times caused its successor to be abandoned, in favour of a new building in Whitstable. In any case, it is difficult to see the need of a church where there are but few houses, unless some modern St. Francis were wishful of preaching here to the birds, the seagulls and the curlews that haunt these marshes and maintain a mingled screaming and melancholy piping, varied sometimes with what sounds like demoniacal chucklings or mocking laughter.

Inland you see the wooded uplands of the old forest district of Blean, with the whirling sails of distant windmills seeming to beckon over the hills and far away. Of the sea one observes nothing until the grassy embankment is climbed, hard by the "Old Sportsman" inn that stands sheltered under the lee of it, but from the top is seen the entrance of the Swale, dotted with many small vessels, with Sheppey about three miles across the channel and the pink-washed houses of the coastguard shining out yonder on Shellness Point.

From this spot the embankment gradually dies down and the land rises slightly to Whitstable. Stakes are stuck in the ooze of the foreshore, which is strewn with myriads of cockle and mussel-shells. Passing a coastguard-station where the coastguard's chief anxieties seem to be concerned rather with his cocks and hens than with guarding the coast, the road comes past the "Jolly Sailor" and the "Blue Anchor," into the hamlet of Seasalter, and thence winds inland. Here the approach to Whitstable is heralded by the notice-boards of the "Bolingbroke Building Estate," a would-be suburb that appears by no means to have attained success. It is one of the very many attempts, so curiously characteristic of these speculative and impatient times of ours, to discount the future; to make a place, *ad hoc*, instead of letting it gradually develop, in response to requirements. The essential difference is that in other times places grew

by gradual accretion of population. The population grew, and the houses increased gradually to meet its needs; but in this present era of “ building estates ” on the edges of towns, it is the speculative greed of landowners that seeks to build or let on building lease, and it is the public which is coy. The imaginations of landowners riot so freely on the alluring prospect of ground-rents that there is nowadays scarce a seaside town whose outskirts are not rendered squalid and utterly detestable with projected roads that are grass-grown failures, and with notice-boards in various stages of abject decay, offering “ desirable sites ” whose desirability appears to be more evident to the vendors than to purchasers. Here, at the approach to Whitstable, notice-boards make what appear to be splendid offers, “ Title-free, rates-free, tithe-free ”—everything, it seems, but rent-free; and yet the “ Bolingbroke Building Estate ” has not resolved into much more than a waste of scrubby pasture, dotted plentifully with signposts marking imaginary streets and avenues with the most grandiloquent names: Valkyrie Avenue, Medina Road, Wauchope Avenue, and so forth. One would conclude, not merely that the ground is *not* “ ripe for building,” but that it has not even blossomed.

Having successfully passed the attractions of “ Ye Olde Sportsman,” the “ Blue Anchor,” the “ Jolly Sailor,” and finally the “ Rose in Bloom ” and the “ Two Brewers,” we come into Whitstable.

Domesday Book, which mentions "Seseltre," says nothing of Whitstable, but there was then a "Hundred of Whitstapele," a division even then of ancient standing. The name was, in its origin, evidently that of some prominent white pole, or post, or even of some white church-tower; for the word "stapol" means any of these; surviving in modern English as "steeple." But no one will ever know what that object really was from which, in such roundabout fashion, the town of Whitstable derives its name.

It is, at first sight, a singularly unattractive place; and the more you see of it, the less you like it. The streets are narrow and mean, without the saving grace of picturesqueness, and the sea-front adds to the squalor by being occupied by the railway-station and a very coaly dock.

Having thus successfully taken away the character of Whitstable, I will now address myself to the oyster fishery.

There are numerous conflicting accounts of the reason for Julius Cæsar's invasion of Britain. Some historians consider he was impressed with the riches of the country in gold and skins, and some—with clearer vision, no doubt—are of opinion that he was actuated by sheer lust of conquest. Whitstable, however, is earnestly of opinion that Cæsar's coming was entirely and exclusively prompted by an appetite for "Whitstable natives." It is a flattering belief. At any rate, the "Rutupine oysters" (the "natives" in question) were at that time high in favour

at Rome, and continued so with all the Roman emperors; so that one instinctively associates "oyster" and "emperor" in indissoluble company.

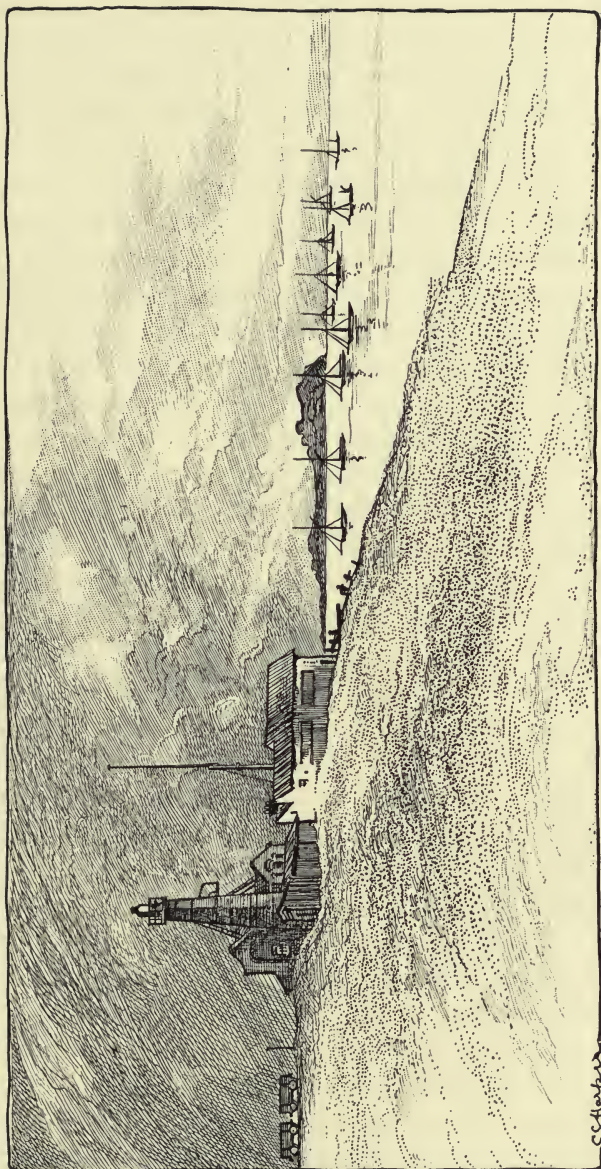
No one will ever discover the origin of oyster-eating. The eating of the first must have been a thrilling experiment, as James the First declared. "He was a very valiant man," said our British Solomon, "who first ventured upon the eating of oysters."

One can imagine that man, faced with the dilemma of starving or being poisoned, making the awful experiment. Whoever he was, or whenever he flourished, he merits the gratitude of that portion of the world which eats oysters.

Speaking for myself, and those of my fellow men who are illogical enough not to like oysters—never having tried them, and never intending to do so—I am quite cold upon the subject, and therefore am inclined the more to applaud Seneca, who, austere philosopher that he was, described the oyster as "a thing that cannot be called food," but an abstruse luxury, "a provocative of appetite, causing those who are already full to eat more." Thus he dismisses oyster-eaters to the cold shades of contempt occupied by such people as those who take bitters and wash themselves out with table-waters. But Seneca himself was an oyster-eater, and spoke, as your true philosopher should speak, at first-hand knowledge.

The Rutupine oyster of Roman times still remains, as the "Whitstable native" of our own

day, the prime favourite, and the cultivation of him here employs some three thousand people. We shall see the fishing-grounds to better advantage on having left Whitstable behind and ascending the cliffs of Tankerton. They are not lofty cliffs, but they do assuredly command a fine view, out over this shallow sea at the entrance of the Swale. There, where at low water you perceive the long "Street Stones" stretching out to sea, many of the eighty-five or more of the Whitstable oyster-fleet will, at the beginning of August, when the season begins, generally be seen going to their work of dredging up the young oysters, so far away as Margate, presently to return with the spoils of their dredge-nets, for laying down in these Whitstable grounds. Others are engaged in dredging for the mature oysters, ready for the market. It takes seven years for the Whitstable natives to reach maturity, and they do so only to perfection in this patch of shallow water, some two miles square. There are many theories to account for the especial virtues that reside in these exceptionally favoured waters; but the generally received explanation of the undoubted fact is that the shallowness of the water permits it to be readily warmed by the sun, and that the streams descending from the land keep the sea-bottom free from mud. The Colchester native, from the shores of Essex, has a great reputation, but he is often dredged up and taken to finally mature in Whitstable waters.



WHITSTABLE: THE OLD LIGHTHOUSE AND THE OYSTER FLEET.

The natural history of the oyster is interesting. There is, for one thing, no "race-suicide" about what would-be eloquent journalists were once used to term the "succulent bivalve," for it has been estimated that each oyster produces 276,000 little ones. It will thus be readily supposed that it takes all the efforts of the busy dredgers to prevent over-population. But the oyster has many enemies, from his birth upwards. Beginning as "spat," or spawn, in June or July, the young swim about for a while, a prey for everything else that swims. They then settle down to grow shells, at the rate of one inch in diameter every year, for three years, after which the growth is slower. Meanwhile, sand, mud, and weeds, but especially crabs and starfish, slay the oysters in hundreds of thousands; and frosts often cause great havoc, that in the winter of 1890-91 being responsible for £15,000 damage. But the starfish is the oyster's worst enemy. He spreads two or three of his arms over the upper shell of the oyster and places the others firmly on the ground, his position being such that his central orifice, or mouth, is at the edge of the shell at the point farthest from the hinge. Then he applies a steady pull. In course of time the oyster gets tired, his big muscle gradually relaxes, and the shell reluctantly opens. The rest is silence.

Thus it happens that the oyster-fishers regard the starfish with the bitterest hatred. It is probably the worst feeling these burly, genial,

jerseyed fellows entertain ; for they don't really dislike the person who doesn't eat oysters. Him they regard merely with a half-amused, half-pitying contempt. Always, of course, excepting oyster-poachers, against whom no law can, of course, be sufficiently severe. To deal with the poachers who come out at night to dredge in the preserves of the fishermen who, after ages of oyster-culture, were incorporated by Act of Parliament into the Corporation of Free Dredgers, in 1793, and have in latter years converted themselves into the "Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company," there are guard-boats always at hand, and, should they not be sufficient, there are artful contrivances laid upon the sea-bed, called "the creeps." These consist of chains with barbed grapnels attached at intervals, which intercept and destroy the dredge-nets of these illegal dredgers.

There are not many prettier sights than that of the oyster-fleet, on a sunny day ; the red-brown sails of the ten- to twenty-ton yawls going in stately procession over these shallow waters. They come back with uncounted millions of "brood" for laying down in this restricted pasture off Whitstable, or with mature oysters for the markets. In the season, which extends by Act of Parliament from August 5th to May 14th, as many as 200,000 "natives" are despatched from Whitstable in a day ; and great is the activity to be observed here in that time, on the foreshore, and in the wooden shanties where they

are scrubbed clean and packed carefully in barrels. Be sure, the Whitstable folk will impress upon you that there is no competition possible with the local specialty.

Surely he must have been one of these local patriots who originally propounded this excruciating conundrum: "What is the difference between a Whitstable oyster and a bad one?" the answer being, "One is a native, the other a settler!"

A pretty, pretty wit!

Among other efforts on this subject this may be recalled: "Why is an oyster the greatest curiosity in the world?" "Because you have to take it out of its bed before you can tuck it in."

One quaint old feature of Whitstable beach is the unconventional lighthouse, cobbled up out of some old copperas-works. It makes not a bad picture, looking out across the Swale, with the cliffs of Warden Point beyond, and the oyster-dredging fleet in between. At low water the shallow channel displays a long rocky ridge called the "Street Stones," supposed to be the remains of a Roman causeway.

At the farther end of Whitstable, and giving character to an otherwise featureless shore, is the wooded bluff of Tankerton, the growing residential suburb that Whitstable is at last throwing off. New roads strike through it, and there are fond hopes that the place will become a great seaside resort; but it has hitherto been slow

in developing. Meanwhile, the cliff-top—a very modest cliff-top though it be—affords the best view of the “Street Stones” and of the crowded flotilla of the oyster-fleet. The coast-line through the hamlet of Swalecliffe, and on to and through Herne Bay, is protected from wastage by the sea by serried ranks of closely-set wooden groynes, erected in the shingle at enormous expense and looking, in the long perspective, like gigantic combs.

CHAPTER IX

HERNE BAY—RECVLVER—WANTSUM—SARRE

HERNE BAY is a place of entirely modern creation, and does not stand upon a bay. The coastline, in fact, runs remarkably straight between Whitstable and Margate, and anything in the nature of a bay is not to be seen. But, as old writers speak of a point here, it seems likely that a bay of some sort existed and has disappeared in the great wastage of the land that has certainly taken place all along this coast and around Sheppey. The "Street Stones" at Whitstable, pointing to a Roman road into a vanished country, the shallowness of the sea, and the many sands out there, and the vague legends that "Herne the Hunter" once chased the deer where the sea now rolls, all support the idea of great encroachments upon the land.

The town of Herne Bay is built upon a fore-shore rising gradually from the water. Where the houses end this line of coast is known as "The Downs"; a rough upland stretch of common or commonable land which forms a peculiar feature of the place, and is an unconventional playground for the children, Herne Bay being

above all else a seaside resort of unsophisticated ways, and favoured by parents with large families.

Herne Bay was one of the earlier created seaside resorts, and rose from out the azure main—or rather, the somewhat mud-streaked sea that does duty for such—at the command of speculators, about 1830. It was actually created, for until that time there were but a few cottages by the shore, or anywhere in the neighbourhood, with a tiny green as the only cultivated ground. The first pier at Herne Bay was the Royal Pier, opened in 1831, the enterprise of a company which spent £50,000 on the building of it. This was a wooden structure, 3,000 feet long, and had a set of rails along its entire length. Carriages fitted with sails were made to run along the tramway when the wind served. At those times when it did not, I suppose one got out and shoved! Such were the simple pleasures of Herne Bay when William the Fourth was King. Passengers from the steamers landed at the pier-head. At the entrance were a number of stone balusters, part of the parapet of old London Bridge, demolished in 1832. They may still be noticed at the entrance to the present pier.

But Herne Bay did not prosper. In vain was a parade installed in 1837, and with it a Clock Tower. The Clock Tower is still with us at Herne Bay; it forms indeed the one architectural, or decorative, feature of the place. True, it is not greatly decorative, unless we adopt the poet's maxim in its favour, "the useful and the beauti-

ful are one." Of the utility of a Clock Tower, with a prominent clock in good working order, there can be, I take it, no doubt whatever ; if only in that it prevents children numerously and continually asking testy old gentlemen what time it is.

Railways ruined the original pier financially, and neglect and the teredo worm wrecked it materially. A second pier was built in 1873, and a third, the present, in 1878, considerably longer than the original and totalling a length of 3,920 feet. Electric cars run along it.

The fortunes of Herne Bay have of late years recovered, and bid fair to continue so long as the site of it exists. There, however, is the problem. The sea is in a destructively encroaching humour, and thus the most elaborate defensive works have been necessary, to arrest the scour of the shingle. No fewer than ninety-one stout timber groynes project from the beach fronting the town, and do succeed in keeping the foreshore intact.

Herne, the parent village of Herne Bay, is a quiet place, a good mile and a half from the shore. It was originally subject to Reculver, the mother-church of this district, to which the lesser churches paid dues. In the end, Herne grew important enough, and bold enough, to refuse tribute, and was threatened by Reculver in 1335 with excommunication ; to no purpose. But the parish still pays five shillings a year for the repair of Reculver church, although that building

is now nothing but a ruin, and its twin towers existent only as land and sea marks.

A kind of poetic justice, a manner of retribution, befell Herne in 1833, when the newly planned town of Herne Bay, less than two miles distant, obtained an Act of Parliament making it independent of Herne.

In the fine church are some interesting brasses, notably the remarkable example to Christian, wife of Matthew Phelip. He was that hard warlike Mayor of London who led the citizens to the battle of Barnet. She "departed from this vale of misery" in 1471. The brass to Peter Halle and his wife Elizabeth, 1420, show them lovingly, hand in hand.

"Here lies a piece of Christ, a star in dust,
A vein of gold, a china dish that must
Be used in Heaven, when God shall feed the just."

Nicholas Ridley, who, as Bishop of London, suffered martyrdom in 1555 at Oxford, was appointed vicar here in 1538. Leaving, he exclaimed, "Farewell, Herne, thou worshipful and wealthy parish, the first cure whereunto I was called to minister God's word. Thou hast heard of my mouth ofttime the word of God preached, not after the Popish trade, but after God's gospel. Oh that the fruit had answered to the seed! But I bless God for all that godly virtue and zeal of God's word which the Lord by preaching of His word did kindle manifestly both in the heart and the life of that godly woman, my Lady



HERNE : THE "SMUGGLER'S LOOK-OUT."

Fiennes." A brass to that excellent lady, dated 1539, is among those to be seen here.

The name of Herne, which really derives from the Anglo-Saxon *hierne*, a corner, has by some been thought to derive from the herons that once abounded in this marshy district; and the modern town of Herne Bay has boldly taken a heron into the arms it has assumed. The village still keeps some curious old houses; among them a white-painted corner house opposite the church, with a tiny triangular window under the eaves,

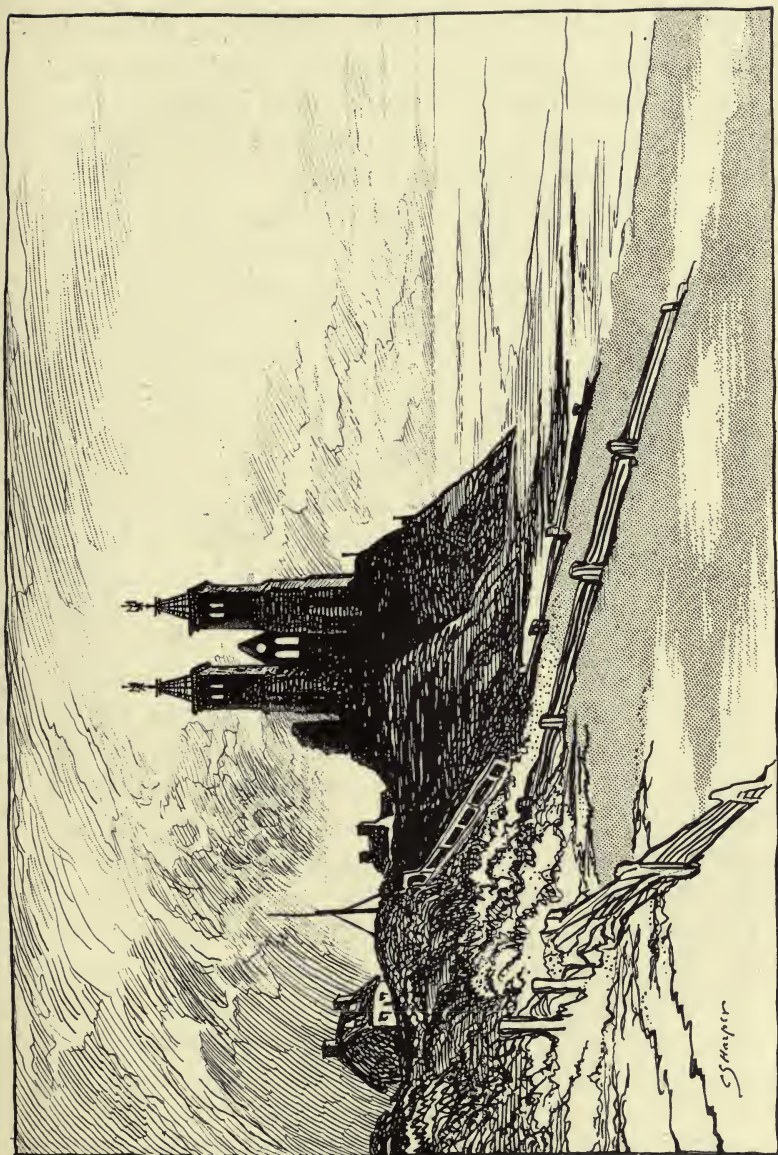
said to have been a smuggler's look-out and signalling station. A still more remarkable building is that on the hill above the church, called, from its ground-plan, the "Box Iron." Extensive cellars exist beneath it, and under the road, with a trap-door on the adjacent green. This building, now very dilapidated, is supposed to have been a smugglers' warehouse.

To Reculver from Herne Bay is a pleasant three miles' walk, with pastures on the right and the open sea on left. The cyclist and the road-user in general must, however, go inland, by Beltinge and Hillborough. Reculver stands at a dead-end. Having seen the historic place, you cannot go forward, but must retrace a part of the way. It is a strange, uncanny-looking corner, both by reason of its end-of-the-world appearance and on account of those twin towers of Reculver church which, crested as they are by skeleton iron steeples and vast weather-vanes, have possibly given rise to the vulgar error of the plural form, "Reculvers." The place-name, a corruption of the Roman *Regulbium*, no doubt seemed so strange that the ignorant thought it was a description of these towers. Here in ancient times the Wantsum channel, dividing the Isle of Thanet from the mainland, opened to the sea, and here the Romans had a fortified port, corresponding with *Rutupiae*, at the southern extremity of the channel, hard by Sandwich. Encroachment of the sea has left but little of the Roman station here, and the church-towers,

now the peculiar care of the Trinity House, stand on the very edge of the tide, instead of half a mile from the shore. This spot, traditionally that to which the converted King Ethelbert retired and died, has always been a prominent sea-mark to mariners, who must keep well inshore here if they would avoid the shoal called Margate Hook. An old legend tells how the Abbess of Davington, near Faversham, being narrowly saved from shipwreck here, while her sister was drowned, built the twin-towered church alike in gratitude for her own safety, to her sister's memory, and for the welfare of all who should in future voyage past. Ingoldsby tells the story, with a vast difference, in his own peculiar vein, in "The Brothers of Birchington," Robert and Richard, whom he names as the none-too-pious founders.

Reculver church, as its remaining towers show, was a fine example of Early English or Late Norman architecture, and could easily have been preserved; but the wanton hands and material minds of 1809 decreed its destruction, lest the sea should do it instead! It would not have passed the wit of man to preserve it, as the towers themselves have been preserved. Substantial stone-and-cement aprons have been constructed here by the Trinity House, and long protective wooden groynes run out to defend the towers against further assault. Grim and minatory they look in certain lights, as impressive in their way as the giant statue of Memnon in Egypt.

The pilgrim of the coast must now turn in-



RECVLVER.

land, a good three miles, to Chislett, a village in the marshes, whose name derives from "Cheselea," *i.e.* "shingle isle." From thence, in less than a mile, he comes to the main Canterbury and Margate road, at Grove Ferry.

The road leading across these marshy levels is really an ancient causeway, marked on old maps "Sarre Wall." This old history of it is still very plainly manifest in its straight course, in its level, raised above the surrounding fields, and in the deep dykes, brimming with water and filled with rushes, on either side. The tall, delicate poplars that line Sarre Wall and confer upon it a distinctive grace, like that of some country road in Picardy, give a gentle sighing voice to every breeze. It requires stronger winds to set the sword-blades of the clustered rushes rustling sharply in the dykes.

This road into Sarre is your only entrance this way into the Isle of Thanet, now an island only by courtesy, but still to be entered or departed from by but two roads, one at either extremity; the one now under discussion, the other at Sandwich. The marshy character of the land still renders roads into Thanet scarce. The Wantsum, the channel that formerly divided the Isle of Thanet from the mainland of Kent, flowed past here in a salt-water estuary half a mile broad in the times of the Romans, who were so concerned to defend each of its two mouths, that they built the strong maritime fortresses of *Regulbium* and *Rutupium* where ruined Reculver

and Richborough now stand. The direct way into Thanet was then, as now, by this road, but it was by ferry that travellers then crossed, and continued for many centuries to cross. The Wantsum had already somewhat shrunk in the time of Bede, who died in 735. It was then three furlongs wide. But that it was readily navigable for ships for another couple of centuries is proved by Earl Godwin's fleet sailing through. That the channel must, however, have been known from the earliest times as a dwindling passage seems evident from the very name given to it by the Saxons ; an adjectival form of the verb *wansian*, to diminish, or to wane.¹

Yet this Wantsum appears to have been practicable for small vessels until 1460, and it was not until 1485 that it had narrowed sufficiently for the original bridge, dating from that year, to be built. That bridge was of course a work of piety, owing its origin to the monastery of the Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul, at Minster, which had from ancient times owned the ferry and had derived from it a handsome revenue. In a curious map of Thanet, the work of one of the monks of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and now in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is to be found a representation of the ferry-boat, with a boatman and a nun, while a man is observed wading from the shore to the boat, carrying a monk as passenger on his back. He is evidently

¹ It is also said to have a common origin with the name of the river Wensum, in Norfolk, and to signify a winding stream.

one of those employed at the ferry by the Abbey, for he wears a cross-badge on his right arm.



From an ancient Map.

THE WANTSUM FERRY.

The lands on either side of the now ineffectual Wantsum are known still as "The Salts."

The days when Sarre was a port are long since done and forgotten, except by industrious delvers into old and musty records. At the same time, it may be not entirely out of place, while lingering here by the parapet of the little bridge, to recall those old circumstances of this "ville of Sarre," as it is still called. That it is so becomes evident to all who pass through it, from the small notice-board displayed at either end. Going eastward, you read "Town of Sarre," and coming west, "Ville of Sarre"; and greatly do these inscriptions puzzle those wayfarers who have not read into the history of the place, and therefore do not know that it is still technically a "ville," that

is to say, one of the smaller members of the Cinque Port of Sandwich.

Standing here, on the insignificant little bridge that now spans the shrunken Wantsum which in times gone by spread where the grass now grows and the cows graze, it is difficult to realise those mediæval days when Sarre was a favourite port of embarkation for France.

It is quite obvious that the name of the Wantsum and the fact of there being nowadays but little water in it must be productive, year by year, of many jocular remarks. I have heard cyclists and others, halting on the bridge, and looking upon the narrow thread of water, say, "Wantsum? yes, wants a good deal I should say. Well, I suppose it'll *have* to want."

This is always fondly considered to be new and original; but a census of wayside remarks overheard in the tourist season would doubtless reveal it to be said, in one form or another, many times a day. The people of Sarre probably got tired of hearing it centuries ago, when the early travellers from Canterbury exercised their wits upon it. Only, in those days, you know, before the Wantsum had shrunk, and when it was yet a broad channel, with a ferry-boat plying across, the joke took another form; such as "H'm, Wantsum, call ye it, fellow? Beshrew me, i' fakins, but it seems, methinks, to want little." The ferryman must before long have grown quite misanthropical, at hearing the like.

Sir F. C. Burnand, sometime editor of *Punch*,

and supposed to be a wit, wrote and published in 1897 what he called the "ZZ Guide to the Bold and Beautiful Kentish Coast." "ZZ" was a new and original way of writing "zigzag"! How did he think of it? He, of course, fell a ready victim to the Wantsum's name. "The river," he writes, "was called the 'Wantsum,'



ST. NICHOLAS-AT-WADE.

and the low marshy land was named the 'Wantsum Moor.' But 'twas the fate of the Wantsum to be swallowed up by the bigger river Stour. 'Nobody Wantsum,' and so the stream disappeared."

Really, now!

You will search in vain for the parish church of Sarre. That ancient building fell into decay

when the port itself ceased to be a seaport and dwindled to its present condition of a small village; and the ruined walls of it became, in the usual manner, a useful quarry for the local farmers engaged in building cowsheds and out-buildings, until all traces of them disappeared. This church stood on the hill-top between Sarre and Monkton. The church of St. Nicholas-at-Wade now serves for Sarre. It stands prominently ahead, on the hill-top, with tall black-flint tower, and opposite it is a group of picturesque seventeenth-century houses, of Dutch-like aspect. The dedication to St. Nicholas, the patron of sailors, marks the ancient maritime situation of the place, and the termination "at-Wade" is a corruption of the Latin "ad vadum"—that is to say, "at the ford"—an allusion to the passage of the Wantsum.

CHAPTER X

THANET'S CORNFIELDS — MONKTON — MINSTER-IN-
THANET—BIRCHINGTON—QUEX PARK—WEST-
GATE—DANDELION.

THE enormous size of the cornfields of Thanet is immediately apparent, and is one of the most striking features of the Isle. The soil, too, is remarkably fertile; owing, according to the old monkish chronicles, to the Divine favour shown to the locality through the virtues of St. Augustine and his Christian mission. Nothing was too tough for the imaginations of those mediæval monks to assimilate.

Three miles across these vast, hedgeless fields, whose waving, golden corn in August meets the blue zenith with a startling contrast, is Minster—"Minster-in-Thanet," more particularly to distinguish it from Minster-in-Sheppey. It is reached through Monkton, a little wayside village, where the old stocks still stand by the grassy selvedge of the road, outside the church. Minster forms one of the most popular excursions for the summer tripper at Margate or Ramsgate. I think they do not come precisely for sake of its archæological associations or its religious history,

but rather because there are popular tea-gardens in the village and the beer at the several inns is supposed to be of super-excellence.

The founding of the original monastery, at Minster, for nuns, was accompanied, according to the legend, by miraculous interpositions, but these are so common in the story of early religious houses that we are not in the least surprised at them; nor is there any room for astonishment in learning that the Saxon King, who, very greatly against his instincts, gave the land for the monastery, did so give it as expiation for murder.

It all happened about A.D. 670, when marvels were still in the making. It was Egbert, eighth King of Kent, who instigated the crime. He had two cousins whose claims to the throne were better than his, but he secured the succession, and, to make the position doubly sure, consigned the unfortunate cousins to death by the agency of one Thunor, whose very name, meaning "thunder," has something of a grandly awful quality. Thunor murdered those rightful heirs, and their bodies were buried under Egbert's throne. It seems a strange choice. But a mysterious heavenly light shone upon the spot and threw the King into abject terror, so that he sent for Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, confessed his share in the crime, and asked what was to be done. On the advice given, he sent for Domneva, sister of the murdered princes, and compounded with her on the terms of giving her, for the pur-

pose of building a monastery, as much land as a hind could run over at one course.

The hind was accordingly released in the presence of the King, and held a straight course over Thanet, running over forty-eight ploughlands, some ten thousand acres, in spite of the attempts made by Thunor to stop it. He had better have let the animal run, without any interference, for, as he attempted to ride across its path, the ground opened in an earthquake and swallowed him "in the infernal regions, in company with Dathan and Abiram," as the old monkish chronicle has it.

Thunor is described by Simon of Durham as "a certain man of sin and son of perdition, a limb of Satan and of the house of the devil." I don't think much more to his discredit could be added; and altogether we may conclude that, if this genealogy be anywise correct, he simply went home to his relations when the earth opened and received him so dramatically.

The line taken by the hind was long known as "St. Mildred's Lynch," from St. Mildred, daughter of Domneva, who succeeded her mother as Abbess. It ran, a green bank, across Thanet, between the manor-house at the east end of Minster church and St. Mildred's Bay, Westgate.

Most of it has been broken down and ploughed under in spite of the monkish legend that the cultivator who destroyed it would meet with the fate of Thunor.

Minster church is a worthy descendant of this



MINSTER-IN-THANET CHURCH.

monastery, its tower and lofty leaded spire forming a landmark for long distances. It is, in fact, by design and not chance that it stands thus, for near by was the Wantsum channel; and to this day we perceive, in the south-eastern angle-turret of this tower, the ancient beacon-tower, possibly of Saxon date, which guided the course of ships to and fro, and probably exhibited a light after nightfall. The general scale and style of the church is altogether superior to that of an ordinary parish church, and still markedly displays its monastic origin. Altogether, its Norman nave and Early English transepts and chancel, together with the carved oaken chancel-stalls, form by far the noblest ecclesiastical monument in Thanet. Some of the eighteen old *miserere* seats remain. One, with the name of "John Curteys," is singular in being dated 1401. It is a rare thing to find a date on woodwork of such antiquity.

I suppose Minster had never a more objectionable incumbent than the notorious Richard Culmer, widely known in his time as "Blue Dick," who was appointed in 1644, in the place of Meric Casaubon, deprived and ejected by the Puritans. "Blue Dick's" nickname derived from his affecting a blue gown, instead of the then customary black; and the notoriety he really seems to have enjoyed came from the extreme fanatical Puritanism that possessed him. His greatest exploit—or the one best known—was the breaking of the painted windows of Canterbury

Cathedral, which he called “rattling down proud Becket’s glassy bones.” It did not, apparently, commend him to the people of Minster, who resented his being thrust upon them and hid the key of the church when he came to read himself in.

Simple souls, and unimaginative ! What difficulty did that present to one of his methods ? None whatever. He simply smashed a window and crawled through the congenial havoc he had made !

The next move was with his new parishioners, who, after the reading-in, hauled him out, and, calling him-“thief and robber,” and reproaching him with having broken into the sheepfold instead of entering by the door, whacked him long and heartily, till their sticks broke and their arms grew tired. One almost suspects they did not like him.

The only servant-girl he could get was one of illegitimate birth ; but it is difficult to see how an accident of that sort should render a domestic servant less domestically efficient.

Relations continued strained at Minster, and Culmer did his best to ensure that they should remain so, smashing all the windows of the church, and removing the cross that finished off the spire. With his own hands, by moonlight, he reared the ladders by which the workmen were to ascend for the purpose. His flock assembled, with jibe and jeer, to tell him that he should carry the work to a logical conclusion by demolishing

the church itself, seeing that it was built in the form of a cross ; but demolition on that heroic scale was beyond him, as the continued existence of the ancient church to this day sufficiently proves.

For sixteen long years Richard Culmer remained at Minster, a purge for local pride and a constant source of offence. Then the Restoration relieved the people of his hateful presence, and effected what nothing else could do. Years before he had been offered a yearly pension, equal to the annual value of the living, if he would only go, and let Minster have a parson more acceptable to the place ; but he had refused, preferring rather to be an annoyance and a stumbling-block. One of his eccentricities was to demolish part of the parsonage—an act as rabid as that of Goldsmith's dog, who, " to gain some private ends, went mad and bit the man."

After the Restoration had ejected him, Culmer resided in obscurity at Monkton, and is said to have died two years later.

It behoves us now, after having, as in duty bound, visited the ecclesiastical capital of Thanet, to return to the coast. This we will do by way of Acol, near which is found the huge chalk-pit called by Ingoldsby the " Smuggler's Leap." This way we skirt Quex Park, and come to Birchington.

" Birchington," says Sir F. C. Burnand, " ought to be a town of schools in association with preparatory academies at Whippingham." N.B.—

This is intended to be funny ; but we can, with very little thought, and a glance at the gazetteer, beat the humorist at his own game, and point out that he forgot, as other preparatory academies, Much Birch and Caynham, in Herefordshire, and Waxham in Norfolk.

Birchington, the place of the birchen trees, is an ancient village which has not yet become swamped and overwhelmed by seaside villas, although there are a good many to be found if you care to seek them. That, however, would be a sorry quest, even though "Rossetti Bungalow," the house in which Dante Gabriel Rossetti died in 1882, in his fifty-fourth year, be among them. Hard by the south porch of the ancient church stands a memorial cross designed by Ford Madox Browne, inscribed :

" Here sleeps
GABRIEL CHARLES DANTE ROSSETTI
Honoured under the name of
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
Among painters as a painter
And among poets as a poet,
Born in London,
Of parentage mainly Italian, 12 May 1828
Died at Birchington, 9 April 1882."

Here is also a stained-glass window to his memory, in the church.

There is discretion and reticence in that epitaph. If you would know how Rossetti conveyed ("convey the wise it call") the methods of the Pre-Raphaelites, and how he was the

author of many of the "bluest" Limericks of his era, you must read Holman Hunt's autobiography, and dip into the various memoirs of their set.

Among the ancient brasses in the church are examples to John Quex and child, 1449; Richard Quex, 1459; Alys Crispe, 1518; John Henyns, vicar, 1523; Margaret Crispe, 1528; and another Margaret Crispe and chrisom child, 1533.

The Quex family were anciently seated at Quex Park, near Birchington. In the sixteenth century the last of their race, the daughter and heiress of John Quex, married John Crispe, whose descendants died out in 1680. Their reign at Quex Park was unremarkable, except for one very strange incident in the life of Henry Crispe, who was abducted in 1657. The story of it seems more like romance than reality, but the incident is historical. The unsuspecting Henry Crispe was aroused late one August night by a party of desperadoes who had landed at Gore End, Birchington, under the command of a filibustering Royalist, one Captain Golding. He was bundled into his own coach and driven to the shore, whence sail was made to Ostend. Crispe was eventually taken to Bruges, and kept a prisoner there. A curious part of the affair is that he had evidently been expecting an attack, and had had the walls of his house loop-holed for musketry. A ransom of £3,000 was demanded; and all he could do was to write to his nephew, Thomas Crispe, his son being ill at the time, to come

and help him. Thomas and the son did what they could, in the face of difficulties, Cromwell having a suspicion that the whole affair was a plot to procure £3,000 for Charles the Second, at that time on the Continent, in very narrow circumstances. He therefore for a time forbade the payment of ransom, and it was eight months before the money was forthcoming and the captive set free.

Henry Crispe was no linguist, and was known until his death in 1663 as “Bon Jour Crispe,” the only foreign phrase he had learnt in his exile.



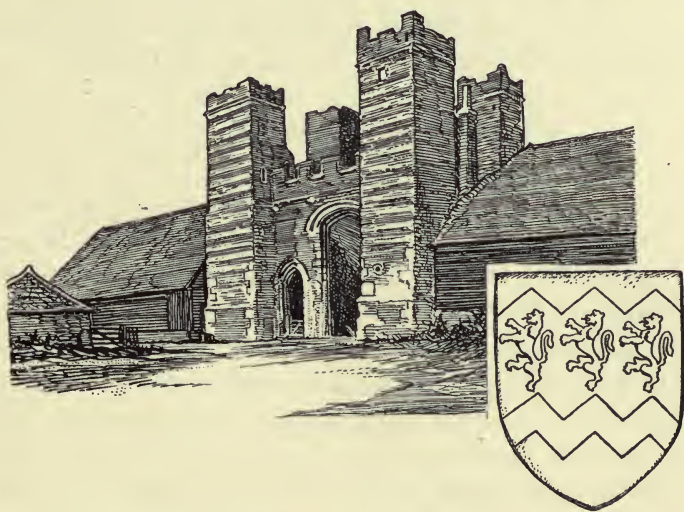
THE WATERLOO TOWER, QUEX PARK.

Quex Park is unquestionably the finest demesne in Thanet. It is a richly wooded estate nearly four miles in circuit, the seat at the present time of Major Powell Cotton, whose park of assorted artillery just within the lodge-gates consists of some thirty ancient guns, some of them dating back to the sixteenth century : all very curious and interesting. The gilded vane and odd-looking spire seen above the massed woodlands in the distance are in the centre of the park, and are most difficult to find when once within the lodge gates. One might, in fact, easily lose one's way at Quex. They crest a lofty red-brick structure called the "Waterloo Tower," built in 1820, and hung with a peal of twelve bells. The spire is a cast-iron one, of a design fondly thought to be Gothic, but very weird and gruesome. The tower itself is used as a mausoleum, and was restored in 1896.

Resuming the way into Margate, the road approaches close to the shore at Westgate, that bungalow town which first arose somewhere about 1878, on the enthusiastic recommendation of the air of Thanet by Sir Erasmus Wilson, at that time one of the most influential of medical men and health-experts. The now much worn and woefully misused word "bungalow," an Anglo-Indian importation, also about that time made its first public appearance here.

At Westgate begin the electric tramways. Away to right of the road, at Garlinge, is an old-world survival : the fifteenth-century gatehouse

of the Dandelion manor-house. The old manorial residence has vanished, but the gatehouse remains, a fine, imposing sight. Here were seated the Daundelyon family, who became extinct with John Daundelyon, last of his race, in 1445. A brass to his memory is seen in the old parish church of Margate. The inscription describes



DANDELION GATEWAY.

him as “gentleman”: the earliest use of that word, it is said, on any existing monument. The family name is a corruption of “Dent-de-Lion,” *i.e.* “Lion’s tooth,” which probably derived from the tooth-like part of the family arms, which are thus expressed, in the queer language of heralds: “Sable, a fesse indented; voided argent; three lions rampant of the same.” A

sculptured shield bearing these charges is still visible on the gatehouse ; and on the springing of the small archway will be found a demi-lion rampant, with a label issuing from his mouth. This was formerly inscribed "Daun-de-lyon," but the words have now quite weathered away. It was the John Daundelyon whose monumental brass is to be found in Margate church who gave the church one of its eight bells. According to an old rhyme once current in Margate—

" John de Daundeleon with his great dog
Brought over this Bell on a Mill-cog."

The bell is of foreign make. The "dog" in question, it has been explained, was a ship. It will, in this connection, be remembered that antiquaries have sought to explain away Dick Whittington's famous cat which brought him good fortune, and suppose it to have been the name of a vessel.

We now come again to close quarters with the seashore, which here begins to assume the aspect of what excursionists style the "real seaside." That is to say, here are cliffs ; and there, ahead, is an illimitable horizon ; also indubitable sands. It is true they are not cliffs on the heroic scale, these chalky bastions. They begin at Birchington and are continued round to Westgate, Margate, and Ramsgate, with a toylike, artificial effect ; rather, you know, as if some enterprising Earl's Court exhibition syndicate

had erected them. They are strangely unconvincing to those who have been used to the great red cliffs of Devon, or the mighty granite heights of Cornwall. Being of no great height, and of such unpicturesque outline, and having been so railed in and scraped and tunnelled and mended with brick, and in all manner of ways impertinently interfered with, they look like the products of art, and very poor art too.

CHAPTER XI

MARGATE

MARGATE the Merry, to which we enter by electric tramway, is the oldest and most popular of English seaside resorts : and also, in some opinions, the most vulgar. However that may be, and dismissing the claims of Rollicking Ramsgate and Southend (to say nothing of Blackpool and Yarmouth) to pre-eminence in vulgarity, Merry Margate is certainly a very crowded and unselect place in August and on occasions of popular holiday. There is then no doubting the reality of Margate, I assure you, nor, for the matter of that, is it anything less substantial in winter, for the extensive brickiness of it is a solemn fact ; but in the dull winter months of short days and bad weather it is something like an elaborate theatrical set scene with the lights turned down and most of the company off the stage. The alleged merriment of Margate, which resides chiefly in the same alliteration that renders Ramsgate "rollicking," is not a local product. It is imparted by the holiday-makers. At other times the town is extremely sedate ; but always (except when a March east wind is blowing)

its air is charged with vitality. On one of those occasions, however, Margate looking north-east, on the most exposed north-easterly verge of Kent, the best thing to do is to stay indoors, beside the biggest fire you can induce the grate to hold. Perhaps even the very bestest thing to do is to have that fire in one's bedroom, and retire to rest with hot-water bottles.

For more than a century and a half Margate has been a holiday-place, and therefore wears an air of permanency which not even Brighton can beat, although its front is more miscellaneous and less stately. In fact, it looks whimsically as though one side of Gower Street had come down from London, for a change—and had not yet benefited by it! Matthew Arnold must have been similarly impressed when he wrote that this was a “brick-and-mortar image of English Protestantism, representing it in all its prose, all its uncomeliness—let me add, all its salubrity.” He had, you perceive, an unworthy affection for the tawdry rags of Continental Roman Catholicism, however insalubrious their nature, and in spite of his much-advertised craving for “sweetness and light.”

Arnold's sneer at Protestantism offended many, but we have travelled far and swiftly on the down-grade in the last half-century, and the thing that would once have seemed impossible has come to pass: Protestantism has become a term of abuse. We have lived to see *that*!

“Margate” may have been originally the

“Meer-geat,” the Anglo-Saxon for “sea-gate”; or more probably the name derived from the “mere,” or little stream, which flowed down to the sea past St. John’s Church, along the line of the street now called The Brooks; “mere” being a well-known Kentish word for a stream. However that may be, Margate is really of ancient origin: an historical fact rather obscured by the growth of the town. Still, one has only to seek that old parish church of St. John to perceive that this was an established place in Norman times. Strange though it may seem, “Margate” was once considered a separate village or hamlet on the seashore, as we read in the itinerary of John Leland, in the time of Henry the Eighth: “Meregate lyith in St. John’s parochie in Thanet v miles upward from Reculver; there is a village and a peere for shyppes now sore decayed.”

It is an extremely dark and rather dirty church, tucked away in an obscure situation, and thus not often seen by the chance visitor. It stands at the back of the harbour, among little odd Georgian streets, and tiny squares of a kind of dolls’-house type, and is surrounded by a mangy churchyard containing trees which look as though they were longing for the country. There are no fewer than thirteen brasses here, all greatly worn, including that to John Daundelyon already mentioned, and a late example, dated 1615, to Roger Morris, with a ship in full sail and an inscription describing him as “one of the six

principall Masters of Attendance of his Mai^{ties} Navye Royall.''' But the most curious is! the fragment of a palimpsest brass hinged in a frame on the south wall of the chancel. The original was evidently a very large example of Flemish make and is curiously engraved with vine-tendrils, a shield of arms displaying three helmets on a field of crosses, two odd nude creatures on stilts, one kicking the



FROM THE PALIMPEST BRASS,
MARGATE CHURCH.



FROM THE PALIMPEST BRASS,
MARGATE CHURCH.

other, reckless of maintaining his equilibrium; and a little monkish figure trying to catch monstrous butterflies as big as himself with a net smaller than the butterflies. This futile endeavour may or may not be intended as a satire upon the vanity of human wishes; but, in any case, it is a matter

for rejoicing that butterflies larger than turkeys do not exist.

A favourite way of reaching Margate from London before the era of steamships and railways was by what most of the passengers called "the 'oy," a conveyance which appeared in print with an "H" denied it in speech. The "Margate Hoy" was a type of sailing-vessel by which our ancestral holiday-makers arrived with much pleasure, or intolerable discomfort as the case might be, after a calm voyage of ten hours, or a tempestuous passage of fifteen. The hoys set sail from the Thames, near the Customs House quay, and conveyed passengers at the extremely moderate fare of half a crown. In after-years, when steamships replaced these clumsy, bluff-bowed old sailing-vessels, which after all looked and behaved like sailing-barges, the "Husbands' Boat," steaming from London on Saturdays, became the main feature of the Margate season. To-day there are still Saturday steamers, of a very up-to-date type, to Margate and Ramsgate; but the term "Husbands' Boat" is altogether outworn and hopelessly stale, now that uxoriousness is no longer even the mark of the middle class and the ideal is, at the best of it, for husbands and wives to make holiday apart, or, at the worst of it, with some one else's partner.

Margate saw the invention of the bathing-machine about 1765, by that modest Quaker, Benjamin Beale. The immodest modesty of that

cumbrous and supremely uncomfortable affair has made the English at the seaside the laughing-stock of other nations ; but brother Broadbrim’s invention still lags superfluous on many a sea-side scene, although bathing-tents actively dispute possession.

The visitor will not have been long in Margate before his attention is drawn to men distributing bills inviting all and sundry to “ Go and see the Grotto ! ” Among the attractions of this place, set forth on these leaflets, is “ two thousand square feet of shellwork ”—a kind of decoration sufficient to make the artistic shudder. The “ Grotto,” which is really an excavation in the chalk, is situated in Bellevue Place along “ The Dane,” a thoroughfare about half a mile from the front. It consists of a passage some 60 ft. in length, ending in a chamber about 12 ft. square. Both passage and chamber are lined with common shells set in cement and displayed in geometrical and floral devices. A great deal of nonsensical legend has accumulated about this place, which is said to be a work of immemorial antiquity. That accepted archæologist, Miss Marie Corelli, in her book “ Cameos,” declares it to be “ one of the World’s Wonders,” and “ a curious and beautiful subterranean temple ” ; and believes it to be a work of the Vikings ; a catacomb where they buried their dead. Unfortunately for this view, we have only to refer to Charles Knight’s book, “ The Land we Live In,” published about 1850, to read that “ the shellwork was done by an

ingenious artisan of Margate who some years ago went to America." The chamber was originally, in fact, the basement-room of the little house above, and the plaster ceiling of it remains. Thus do the Vikings vanish and feminine archæologists become discredited !

To witness Margate in the spring preparing to awake from her winter sleep and to make ready for early visitors is alike amusing and pathetic. The long, empty vista of seaside promenade has as yet no promenaders, but a scattered army of painters and gardeners is busy upon seats, shelters, railings, and flower-beds. Everything is being swept and garnished ; and so long and so thoroughly has Margate been looked after by a Town Council, that the parlour-maidenly neatness has spread even to the sands, and you may see Corporation men walking by the sad sea-waves picking up and neatly disposing of the seaweed and other jetsam which the rude and sportive winds have left in unseemly fashion on the ocean's melancholy marge. Even those ridiculous chalk cliffs are not allowed to present any jagged, picturesque outlines. They are pretty freely cased with brick ; but, it must in justice be allowed that they have not been so nearly converted into brick walls as have been the cliffs at Ramsgate. And in another matter, too, Margate has not gone to extremes. Dogs (unless things have latterly been pressed to extremity) may still bark on Margate sands. They may not do so at Hastings, on penalty of the owner being fined by the local Sir Oracles.

"Going it!" is said to be the note of Margate. No one who has been there in August will dispute that. Those who do not wish to "go it," and would rather enjoy a quiet, contemplative holiday, had better go elsewhere. Margate makes merry (this alliteration is positively infectious) from early morn till dewy eve. You awake to a concert of sounds, in which the bugling and clarionetting of early brake-parties is brassily prominent, and at night are sent to sleep by the slowly expiring minstrelsy of varied bands. Let it be added that the air of Margate is so forceful that even those constitutionally and mentally averse from all that "going it!" may be taken to mean let themselves go here. There was once a highly respectable curate who "went it!" to such an extent—but that is not our business.

Both Ramsgate and Margate claim the story of the typically pursy, Perkyn Middlewick type of city man who, stepping on to the railway platform on the arrival of the train and feeling already the enlivening effect of the atmosphere, exclaimed, "Isn't this invigorating?"

"No, sir," returned a porter, "it's Margate" (or Ramsgate, as the case may be).

Some few have not the capacity for enjoyment. Sometimes you see, along these crowded sands, tearful small boys who have somehow missed the note of the place. "I have brought you out to enjoy yourself, sir," said a robustious father to such an one; "and if you don't begin to do it pretty quick, you'd better go home!"

Margate has a wonderful reputation for its rough, vigorous, revivifying air ; it is also known at one season of the year—may it be hinted without offence?—for its very rough, vigorous coast population. A once well-known actor who long since joined the great majority and exchanged his fame for oblivion used to illustrate this in one of his breezy anecdotes. He and a friend, in a sailing-vessel, found themselves in difficulties in a fog. Suddenly conscious, by sounds and dim lights, that they were off a coast town, they hailed the shore : “ Ahoy ! ahoy ! Where are we ? ” A thunderous voice responded through the fog, “ Go to —,” whereupon Ryder, the actor in question, turning to his friend, exclaimed : “ All right, my boy—Margate ! ”

Somewhat similar testimony—although not specifically limited to Margate—may be found in the pages of a familiar novelist ; Mr. Thomas Hardy remarking, in that beautiful story “ A Pair of Blue Eyes,” that “ it has been calculated by philosophers that more ‘ damns ’ go up to heaven from the Channel, in the course of a year, than from all the five oceans put together.”

It is a profane way of stating a fact of which no one will be concerned to deny the truth.

Not only the seafaring and the coastwise populations indulge in strong language : conversation in general along the roads is decidedly over-proof. There is too much “ damyer ” about the roadside intercourse of these parts, produced largely by the animosities of motorists and the

drivers of chars-à-bancs, who do not love one another, but unite and make common cause against the electric tramways in vituperation. The tramways, the chars-à-banc traffic, and the motor-cars have indeed greatly changed the aspect of Thanet and its seaside resorts. The "oldest inhabitant" of some few years hence will be able to tell strange tales of a time when he knew of rural roads and saw wild-flowers :

THE GAFFER'S STORY

" Yes, I'm a 'underd an' six, an' healthy enough in a general way,
 But that don't signify much in these times, when ye meet a couple o' dozen centurions a day.
 I can manage a dozen mile afoot ; can dig, read, an' holler, an' chew,
 But, lor' bless ye ! that's nothing now : lots do all that, an' more.
 An' in Ireland, they tell me, centurions grow on every blackberry-bush, so to speak,
 An' corsties the Guv'ment in ole-age pensions thousands an' thousands a week.
 I suppose it must be something, don't ye think, in the hair ?
 For at Brighton, where the hair is, there's dozens an' dozens o' centurions *there*.
 No, I don't mean the 'air of yer 'ed, but the hair of the sky—
 It's difficult to make you townsfolk unnerstand, however you try.
 An' 'Centenarians' *you* say. Why, no ! Centurions *I've* allus carled 'em, an' allus shell,
 Although I daresay that way o' yourn may do 'most as well.
 I don't 'old with yer new-fangled words : they're all very fine—
 Like now, when you have your dinner, you say you are ' going to dine.'

You don't seem to me to get fatter on 'dining' than 'dinner :'
'Fact, it seems some'ow to me, you're all o' you worried an'
thinner.

Eh ! what was the country like when I wer' young ?

Well, it's an old, old story now, forgotten ever so long.

In them days there was hedges, an' ellums in the hedge-rows,
An' hazels, an' blackberry brakes, an' bracken, an' goodness
knows

How many wild-flowers there. The roads suttingly *was*
rather muddy ;

But the children used to go to the hedges for what they carled
'Nature Study.'

'Not much nature now,' you say. No : ye see the world
got so clever, it 'ad to go,

An' now if ye wanted to see a cowslip or a buttercup, I don't
know what ye could do :

P'raps they've got a speciment or two in the Natural Mystery
Museum,

An' if I was you, I'd go to South Kensington, an' try an' see
'em.

'Hist'ry,' you say, 'not Myst'ry' ; well, maybe so, 'tis arl
the same to me—

I don't care, not at arl, whichever o' them it be !

Pretty things, an' simple they was : I 'aven't seen none fer
half a sentry, I'm sure ;

'Cos the gardeners took 'em in hand, an' cultivated 'em till
they didn't resemble their own selves no more.

Look ahere ! Ye see this yer flower what looks like a double-
daffodil gone mad :—

Well : *that* was 'riginally a buttercup, before it was super-
cultivated, me lad !

They cut down the hedges an' trees, an' straightened every
one o' the winding ways

That was to be found everywhere in them oncultivated
days.

For, ye see, they'd got moty-cars of such extrorynary power
Which 'ud do well up to 80 or 90 miles an hour.

An' when, after coming, sudden-like, round the corners, they'd
killed a good proportion of the population,

They was looked upon with something near vexation.

With a long, straight road, when a motor's heard, an 'umming
in the distance,

You can 'op aside like winking, an' so save your existence ;

But on a winding road it wasn't no manner o' good, I declare,

They was onto, an' over you, before ackshully you knew they
was there.

An' now there's rails, 'stead of hedges, an' there ain't now no
dust, nor trees ;

An' England's just the same from end to end, an' never no
kind o' diff'rence you sees.

Why, when I wer' a lad, there were 'ardly two places the
same :

Each 'ad it's own character, just as every one its own name.

But now they tell me the Orkneys is a'most the same as
Pegwell Bay,

An' Paddington an' Penzance own brothers, an' Hastings an'
Eastbourne, an' such places as they,

Ain't got never a pin to choose between:—

Ah ! things is very diff'rent to what they used to been."

CHAPTER XII

KINGSGATE—THE NORTH FORELAND—BROAD-STAIRS—ST. PETER'S

THE plebeian jollity of the older part of Margate, by the Harbour and the Jetty, the Fort and the Paragon, gives place westward to modern and more select Cliftonville.

The walk past Cliftonville the select, along the grassy cliffs, leads round by Foreness Point and discloses a succession of chalky nooks, "gaps," and "gates," where little ravines run down to the sea : every one of them pretty well peopled in the summer season. If you want a cloistered holiday, you will not be well advised to repair to the Kentish coast for it. Frankly, such a thing is not to be obtained here. But, at any rate, thus tracing the "ocean's melancholy marge," you do at least escape the electric tramways which cut across Thanet inland and help to vulgarise this historic isle.

A pretty inlet, called "Botany Bay," leads to Kingsgate, and is a spot sufficiently desirable, except for the scattering of new villas there and the notice-boards of the Kingsgate Residents' Association, prescribing what things the wayfarer

may not do. These appear to be so numerous that it would seem to be almost better (as it would indeed be shorter) to specify the few things that are still allowed.

Kingsgate was known as "Bartholomew's Gate" until 1683, when Charles the Second landed here. It is naturally picturesque, and is rendered more so by the pretentious "castle" on the head-



KINGSGATE.

land, with the North Foreland lighthouse peering across the intervening neck. The castle, of black flint, was built in the eighteenth century by Lord Holland, who, in common with other wealthy people of what was then regarded as "good taste," patronised the romantic Gothic spirit and built himself not only a make-believe castle but a sham convent as well. The poet Gray, he of the "Elegy," disclosed himself as a bitter satirist,

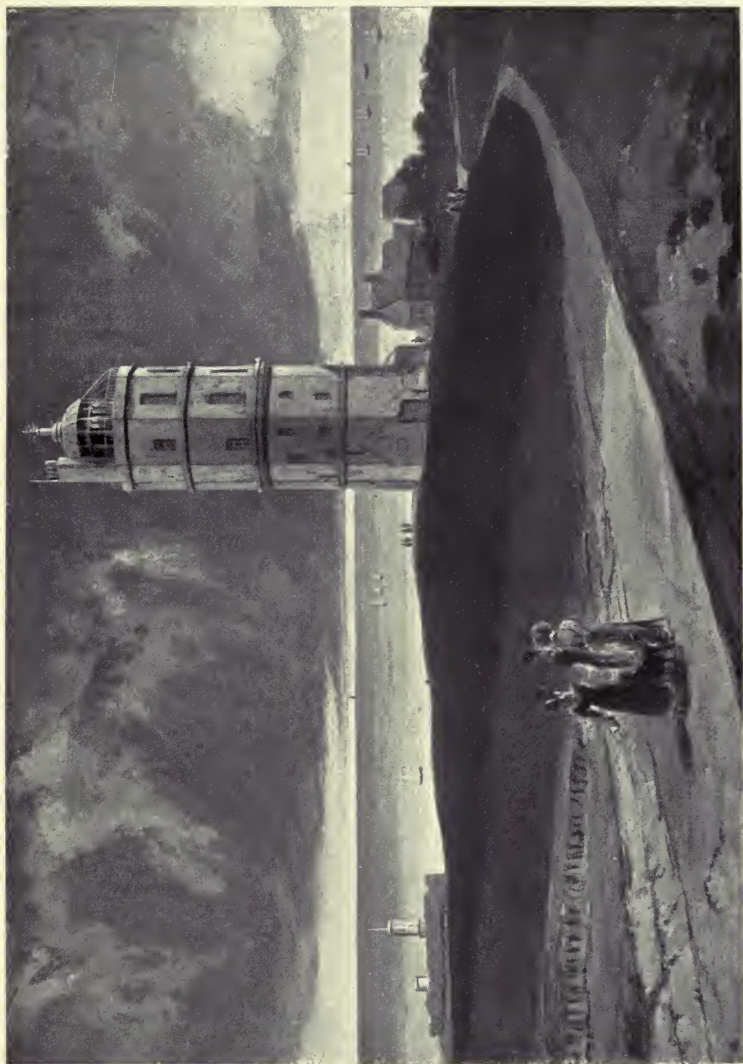
not only of Lord Holland's castellated residence, but also of Thanet :

“ Here reign the blustering North and blighting East ;
No tree is heard to whisper, bird to sing ;
Yet nature could not furnish out the feast,
But he invokes new terrors still to bring.

“ Now mouldering fanes and battlements arise,
Turrets and arches nodding to their fall ;
Unpeopled monasteries delude our eyes,
And mimic desolation covers all.”

Passing the flint-faced “ Captain Digby ” inn, famed in the story of the *Northern Belle* shipwreck of January 1857, we come to the North Foreland, “ the most easterly projection of Kent,” the cape mentioned by Ptolemy, about A.D. 150, as *Κάντιον άκρον*, or “ Acantium Promontory.”

The North Foreland light, once occupying a solitary situation on the cliff-top, is now becoming the centre of a number of villas, whose windows at night form lower and of course much more feeble illuminations. But the sea is here spangled with as many lights as the land, for off the shore are those dangerous shoals, the famous Goodwin Sands. Dickens, many years ago, in the course of a sketch of Broadstairs, wrote a good description of them and of the North Foreland light, mentioning “ the Goodwin Sands, whence floating lights perpetually wink after dark, as if they were carrying on intrigues with the servants. Also there is a big lighthouse called the North



THE NORTH FORELAND LIGHTHOUSE.

After W. Daniell, R.A.

Foreland, on a hill behind the village, a severe parsonic light, which reproves the young and giddy floaters, and stares grimly out upon the sea."

But since 1880, when the lighthouse was altered, the light has suffered a complete change, and is not now the steady-going gleam it used to be. It occults every half-minute, displaying a white and red light for twenty-five seconds, followed by an eclipse of five seconds. The effect, compared with the light that Dickens described, is something like that which would astonish the beholder if a Bishop were to wear a red tie, or take to drink.

The first lighthouse on the North Foreland was a wooden building, erected by Sir John Meldrum in 1636. This was destroyed by fire half a century later. A temporary beacon replaced it, and this in turn was succeeded by a flint octagonal tower, bearing an open brazier of coals. This was afterwards enclosed behind glass, and the coals were kept aflame throughout the night by the lightkeeper constantly playing on them with a bellows! Those certainly were the heroic times of lighthouse tending.

The licensee of the first lighthouse was given the right of levying a toll of one penny per ton on all British ships, and twopence per ton on all foreign vessels passing the Foreland, he paying the Crown an annual rent of £20 for fifty years. This grant was renewed to various other persons for other terms of fifty years. The last of these

licensees bequeathed the unexpired years of his term to Greenwich Hospital, to which a renewal was granted for ninety-nine years. At the end of that period, the lighthouse was, rather belatedly, taken over by the Trinity House, whose Elder Brethren then paid the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital about £8,000, by way of compensation.

And thus we come to dear, delightful Broadstairs, which, like every Thanet coast-town or village, is set down in a gap, or "gate," of the cliffs, by which, as by a staircase, you land and ascend from the sea. Here the gap is a bay, rather larger than most, hence the adjective, "Broad." It was anciently "Broadstowe," but why never "Bradgate" or "Broadgate" I cannot imagine. At any rate, it matters little. The point is that here is Broadstairs, very much the same place as that Dickens knew and loved. Let an anathema be here pronounced against that man who shall ever contemplate remodelling this cheery little holiday-place—the delight of children, I was about to say—really the delight of all who know it! And I think that anathema should be made retrospective and launched against whoever they were who built the great ugly barrack hotel on the south cliff. The striking alteration that has been effected in the remodelling of the so-called "Bleak House" may, however, be welcomed, in spite of the change thus made in the appearance it wore in the time of Dickens. "Fort House," which is its proper

name, was really so ugly that everyone who is not a Dickens fanatic must rejoice at the blest change.

Dickens first made the acquaintance of Broadstairs in 1837, and he did not finally desert it as a holiday resort until 1859. Enthusiasts for whom no detail of Dickens's life is too small or insignificant have discovered that his first lodgings were in High Street, at the house now numbered "31." It has been entirely rebuilt, but their enthusiasm is of a dreadnought quality superior to such accidents, and they flock to see the place because the conclusion of "Pickwick" was written there: in the house that no longer exists. One would think some peculiar virtue lingered in the air. Lawn House, and Number 40, Albion Street, now incorporated with the "Albion Hotel," were favoured by him before he took Fort House, in 1850. There he wrote a portion of "David Copperfield," but positively not a line of "Bleak House"; and that name, given later and still surviving, is a quite unwarranted title, unless indeed it may be taken as descriptive of its undoubtedly bleak and exposed situation.

Dickens, in 1843, described Broadstairs as "a little fishing place; intensely quiet"; but presently the growing popularity of it began to qualify his pleasure. In 1847 he wrote: "Vagrant music is getting to that height here, and is so impossible to be escaped from, that I fear Broadstairs and I must part company in time to come. Unless it pours of rain, I cannot write half an

hour without the most excruciating organs, fiddles, bells, or glee-singers. There is a violin of the most torturing kind under the window now (time, ten in the morning) and an Italian box of music on the steps, both in full blast." And so after 1859 the place knew Dickens no more.

"Broadstairs," says a booklet issued in recent years, setting forth the desirability of the building-land round about it, "has been vastly altered and improved since Dickens's time. Mansions and villas have sprung up in all directions, public thoroughfares have improved, or been newly constructed, promenades have been formed along the sea front, commanding extensive prospects of land and marine scenery, charming gardens have been laid out."

This is a builder's, an auctioneer's, and land-agent's idea of a vastly improved place; but, although Broadstairs is still delightful, I do not think any one else will be found to agree with the ideas put forward by these interested persons. Most people would prefer the comparative seclusion of forty years earlier. But you are not to suppose it to have been altered to any appreciable degree. The surroundings have been vastly changed, but the little bay with the queer old jetty is the same, although something, I know not what, has recently been done to the jetty, something in which plenteous tar is concerned.

You go down to the harbour past the Droit Office and through the old archway called "York Gate," built, according to the inscription upon it,



BROADSTAIRS: YORK GATE

by George Culmer in 1540, and repaired by Sir George Henniker in 1795. This gateway, it is rather surprising to learn, was built as a defence against the foreign foe. It may, when fitted with its wooden door, "slammed, barred, and bolted," have detained an enemy for a brief space, but it can never have been a formidable obstacle. The suggestion may be ventured that it was designed

to detain the fierce foeman only until the feeble folk of Broadstairs of old could snatch up a few belongings and hurry away. The flimsy old stone and black-flint archway is liberally cobbled with brick, and valerian and grasses grow on its mouldering walls.

Down along the jetty Broadstairs looks its best. Here is the "Tartar Frigate" inn, flint-faced, and here, too, the lifeboat-house, with the *Mary Barton* lifeboat, presented in 1897, whose chief exploit was the saving of ninety-three lives on July 14th, 1911. So, you see, Broadstairs knows something else beside holiday sunshine and calm days. The old figurehead of a Highlander here, built on to the side of a sail-loft, hints as much. From what far-away shipwreck it derived is forgotten; and the Highlander, although still looking out with mien so dauntless, is now a much-scarred and battered veteran. He once, you notice, drew a sword, but his right hand and sword are gone.

Broadstairs is extraordinarily self-contained, tightly packed, cheerful, and bustling, but there are quiet nooks in it; appropriately named, too. "Serene Place" is one of them. The electric tramways which now quarter so much of Thanet do not trouble the little town, but pass by some distance at the back, up along the wilderness tableland of "Dumpton Park Drive," and a kind of God-forsaken No Man's Land, horribly dreary and depressing, which stretches between Broadstairs and Ramsgate.



BROADSTAIRS.

St. Peter's, the village where the mother-church of Broadstairs is situated, is a mile and a quarter in the hinterland, with tramcars whirling all round it.

"In the pretty rural churchyard of St. Peter's," I read, "is a headstone to mark the last resting-place of Richard Joy, the 'Kentish Samson.'"

Now the churchyard of St. Peter's, pretty though it may be, is so little rural that houses numerously and intimately look upon it; and the pathway through the very forest of tombstones it contains is asphalted and strictly railed in. Fortunately, however, for those interested in this mortuary way, Richard Joy's tombstone adjoins the path, and his epitaph, surmounted by representations of thoughtful-looking cherubs and a couple of trumpets, is distinctly to be read from it.

Thus you may read :

IN MEMORY OF MR. RICHARD JOY
(call'd the Kentish Samson) who
Died May 18th 1742, Aged 67

*"Herculean Hero ! Fam'd for Strength
At last Lies here his Breadth & Length.*

*"See How the Mighty Man is Fall'n !
To Death y^e Strong & Weak are all one.*

*"And the Same Judgment doth Befall
Goliath Great, as David Small."*

Joy, who performed many extraordinary feats of strength, including the pulling against a power-

ful horse, the lifting of a weight of 2,240 lbs., and the snapping of a rope that had resisted a breaking strain of 35 cwts., was one of the smuggling fraternity, and met his death by drowning when engaged in one of those contraband exploits. His sister was almost as strong as himself, and performed many remarkable feats of strength.

This is an authentic memorial, but those irresponsible books, the various Collections of Epitaphs, tell us of the following choice specimen to be found here :

“ Against his will,
Here lies George Hill,
Who from a cliff
Fell down quite stiff.
When it happened is not known
Therefore not mentioned on this stone.”

It is quite easy to “collect” epitaphs on the terms of inventing them ; and this, as might well be supposed, is a pure effort of the imagination.

CHAPTER XIII

RAMSGATE

THE old seaport and holiday-resort of Ramsgate may be reached quickly along the desolate Dumpton Park Drive already spoken of; but the pedestrian's better way from Broadstairs is past that eyesore the Grand Hotel, to the grassy cliffs' edge. These are interrupted by some of those "gates" and "gaps" characteristic of this part of the coast. Crossing the bridge at Dumpton Gap, and past some fortifications, Ramsgate itself is reached by way of Wellington Crescent, whose name, like that of the thoroughfare near by, called the "Plains of Waterloo," sufficiently well dates this part of the town to the 1815-20 period.

It is well to note here that all these Ramsgate developments at this point, on the East Cliff, and even the busy town and harbour of Ramsgate itself, are only the expansion, since the eighteenth century, of that original village situated one mile inland, where the mother-church of St. Lawrence still may be found. Ramsgate—spelled "Raunsgate" until the time of Edward the First—derives from "Ruim's Geat," that is to say, the "marsh

gate” ; and where the busy harbour now is the fishermen of remote times drew up their boats and dried their nets, going home inland to St. Lawrence. Here the cliffs of Thanet die away to the marshes and levels of Pegwell Bay and Sandwich Flats ; and the early fisher-folk, for safety’s sake, preferred to live away from the shore, upon which an enemy might (and often did) unexpectedly land. When Ramsgate first began to grow, its inhabitants, seeking a respectable remote antiquity, affected to believe the place-name derived from “ Roman’s Gate,” but even the credulous old Hasted, the eighteenth-century historian of Kent, could not accept that etymology.

As the far more ancient, and once immeasurably more important town of Sandwich, decayed, so Ramsgate grew ; but, although Ramsgate has long been a considerable town and has now a population exceeding 28,000, still increasing, it was only incorporated so recently as 1884, and is still in some respects merely a “ Ville of Sandwich,” whose population is less than 4,000. Thus is the link maintained with the ancient tale of the Cinque Ports, when Sandwich was great and powerful and Ramsgate a mere fishing-village.

The commercial beginnings of Ramsgate are found in the construction of the harbour, between 1749 and 1761. The town then rapidly grew ; although the cost of dredging and maintaining the depth of water rendered Ramsgate harbour dues among the heaviest in existence—an unde-

sirable prominence still maintained. The obelisk by the quayside was erected in 1822 in memory of the embarkation of George the Fourth for Hanover—not one of the great events of history. Five years later the parish church of St. George was built : one of the works of Augustus Welby Pugin. Its lofty lantern-tower, prominent in the High Street, is fine and rather foreign-looking ; but, with the rest of the building, looks better at a distance, the material being common stock-brick, and the architectural details very poor. Pugin, one of the great figures of the Gothic revival in the beginning of the nineteenth century, has long since been out-distanced by more scholarly and more artistic architects. He was a Roman Catholic pervert, and oddly divided in his appreciations. “ There is nothing worth living for,” he said, “ but Christian architecture and a boat.” He was an enthusiastic sailor, and was in appearance the very ideal of a pilot. He designed the Roman Catholic church and monastery of St. Augustine, at the very extremity of the West Cliff, overlooking Pegwell Bay, and died at his villa, “ The Grange,” adjoining, in 1854. Truth compels the addition that his Gothic church, however highly it was once thought of by himself and others—he considered it his best work—is extremely poor, alike in design and in the use of the materials—black flint and stone—employed. He seems not to have possessed that sense of texture in the use of materials without which even the best design looks poor. It is safe to

say that even the most moderately equipped architectural student of to-day could do better.

These remarks are applicable enough here, although we have only arrived yet at the East Cliff ; because, cresting this cliff, is the great Granville Hotel, which was also designed by Pugin and was once also considered a wonderful example of design. You may note how highly Pugin was then thought of by the bust of him on the promenade in front.

The Granville does things on a lordly scale, and has an express of its own from London. Down below it, indeed, and in direct communication, is the railway station, on the sands, beneath the cliffs. There is a forthright, downright manner about the railway company which rather challenges admiration, even if the slowness and unpunctuality of its trains and the filthiness of its carriages evoke our disgust. The Company seems to say, " You want to go to the seaside at Ramsgate ? " and then, without more ado, not only conveys you, but, in a manner of speaking, actually deposits you on the seashore, as near the sea as possible ; short of being actually flung into it.

The railway comes in by a black inferno of tunnel, and smokes the cliffs to a sooty hue. And here, before you, are the famous sands of Ramsgate, playground in the summer season of uncounted thousands of holiday-folk. They have rendered this no place for a quiet holiday ; and effectively disprove the ancient and much-quoted saying, wrongly attributed to Froissart,

“The English take their pleasures sadly.” Can you come away from Ramsgate sands with that belief ?

It is rather curious nowadays to read Dickens’s short story, “The Tuggses at Ramsgate,” to note that, in the novelist’s mind, a more or less vulgar Cockney who had suddenly found himself possessed of twenty thousand pounds, would think at once of Ramsgate as a holiday-place for himself and family. He would probably not do so now ; but the general trend of popular literature in those days was in the same direction of comparatively unenterprising holidays on the nearest coast-line.

Thus, according to one of the innumerable guides to Ramsgate, published in 1864, the following concatenation of summer circumstances clearly pointed out to the Londoner the desirability of taking holiday on the Kentish coast in general, and at Ramsgate in particular ; that is to say : “When the weather gets so hot that soda-water bottles are dangerous as powder-flasks, and go off like pistols ; when flowers die as soon as they are plucked, and butchers’ shops smell unpleasantly ; when the London restaurants ice their bitter ale, and pine-apple is at a halfpenny the slice ; when your hair is always moist and your listless arms hang at your sides like bell-pulls ; when old gentlemen leave off flannel and sit in draughts with their waistcoats open, whilst elderly ladies pearl-powder their faces ten times a day ; when the warm fingers make marks on the new

novel, and dogs have disagreeable expressions and long tongues ; when the ' catch-'em-alives ' at the grocers' are dotted with dead flies thicker than the currants in a Christmas pudding, and when the trees in the squares seem powdered over with Scotch snuff. When all these things are seen and take place, then mamma thinks how delightful the sea-breeze must be, and suddenly discovers that the children look pale. Then she carefully points out to papa at breakfast that the baby is as white as melted butter, that little Selina has nasty black marks under her eyes ; and at dinner she tenderly makes the stubborn father notice that Tom has scarcely eaten enough to fill an egg-cup, and that Johnny has emptied both water-bottles, as if sickening for a fever. If the stern husband should still resist, then one day, when he is at business, the doctor is sent for, and he, charming humbug, knows too well his duty not to prescribe ' change of air.' Then, as a further precaution, Selina is put to bed, Tom is forced to take bitter pills in orange marmalade, and Johnny made to drink wine-glasses of pink stuff, until at last papa gives way before the threatened doctor's bill. Then carpets are taken up, chairs piled one on another into barricades of legs, the picture-frames are covered with gauze, the servants put upon board-wages, and at last the family, with twenty boxes, goes to the seaside."

That was the elaborate way in which excuses were made for holiday-making in the '60's. Such

were the methods of the English in the days when crinolines were worn and chignons were considered fashionable. Our fathers and mothers, it will quite readily be perceived, were not yet emancipated from the workaday ideal that had hitherto governed England: that grim, joyless, slogging spirit that had made the nation great, but made it dour as well; and no one, you know, felt really quite easy in conscience at taking holiday. To revel in doing nothing was unknown. So some excuse, some way out of a difficulty, had to be invented, and it generally was found in such transparent pretexts as above. And yet Ramsgate sands were as crowded then as now, and the "husbands' boats" that plied from London were full. Frith painted his celebrated picture of Ramsgate sands, showing a merry throng, looking the "picture of health"; and so it is very evident that a large number of people successfully adopted the holiday for health's sake deception.

"And now," continues our guide, "the seaside towns get busy. Those virtuous elderly spinsters who have lived the long winter months in their deserted houses, solitary as spiders in their webs, wake up from their torpidity and grow lively with the summer heat. They take from the linen-closet the clean blinds for the bedroom windows, and the net curtains for the 'handsome drawing-rooms' and 'neat parlours'; the faded chintz coverings are washed and ironed; and, buying a bottle of furniture-

polish, they make their poor arms ache with rubbing up the dull tables and sideboards into a waxy lustre. The stationer sells off his stock of embossed cards, engraved with 'Apartments to Let,' and the spirited proprietors of libraries, bazaars, and assembly-rooms have their pianos tuned, and make arrangements with musicians and singers from London."

To-day the August crowd is far less domestic than that pictured above; but the same old "amusements," plus penny-in-the-slot machines and other inventions not dreamt of forty years ago, prevail. It is, we will say, the harbour, midday. The weather, in nautical phrase, is "fresh"; to the inexperienced Cockney it is "stormy"; yet the qualmy holiday-folk are sufficiently brave, or rash, to venture for a sail in one of the yachts now filling up. Four of them are lying alongside the pier-wall, and are advertised to sail at 1 p.m.; but, although it is now past two o'clock, they show no signs of moving—except the disturbing movement imparted to them, even in harbour, by the roughness of the waves, which already, before the voyage has begun, is rendering many of the bold trippers dimly uncomfortable. But they have paid a shilling each for the trip, and intend to take their shilling's-worth, even though they pay the penalty of being sea-sick. A Briton will at all costs have his money's worth, if in any way possible. That is why, collectively, as a nation, we "rule the waves," although, individually, we too often lie

in agonised prostration aboard, even before the stormy winds do blow.

“Fine day for a sail,” shout the touts. It must be bad weather indeed when these worthies cease that cry. A crowd of idle holiday-makers, bored with holiday-making, and incapable of making holiday gracefully, look on, without the slightest real interest. Pickpockets are busy.

Good-humoured man, easy in his mind because there is nothing in his pockets to lose, to one of the light-fingered (not so dexterous as he might be) fumbling awkward fingers in his coat:

“Keep it there, sonny; keep it there, if yer ’and ’s cold!”

Chorus of touts: “This way, gents, for the large yacht, *Moss Rose*. ’Ere y’are, lidy, for the *King George*. Now sir, come along; I’ve bin wyting for yer. Now miss, just goin’ to start!”

The Ramsgate Town Council has heroically attempted to provide amusement for holiday-makers, and has sought (perhaps with a success only indifferent) to disguise the more urban and grimly commercial aspects of the place around the harbour. After all, there is not much of Ramsgate sands. Measured by the shores of Yarmouth, let us say, they are very small, and are crowded to extremity. The new Marine Drive, constructed in 1891 at a cost of £80,000, and intended to connect the East and West Cliffs, has been with much ingenuity provided with elaborate rockeries planted with rock-

plants and provided with ornamental waters ; but the highly dangerous electric tramways, plunging down the steep gradients and sharp curves, detract greatly from the front.

Personally, I am much more impressed with the curious old market, and with its fine display of flowers, fruit, and vegetables. The market, and (one must not forget these) the extraordinary number of public-houses facing the harbour, are sufficient to attract even the most casual notice. I knew a person with a bent for philosophical inquiry who was greatly struck by never seeing any one enter these places of refreshment. He commented upon this curious fact to one of those broad-beamed fishermen which only the coast of Kent seems able to produce. This worthy answered with a smile, "Lor' bless you, sir, I knows every nail and every knot-hole in every one on 'em. The customers goes in, right enough, early ; and they don't come out till closing-time." The moral of this would appear to be that philosophers should begin their observations at an earlier hour.

CHAPTER XIV

PEGWELL BAY—EBBSFLEET—THE LANDINGS OF
HENGIST AND OF ST. AUGUSTINE—RICHBOROUGH

BUT to have done with Ramsgate. We may perhaps explore to the very end of the West Cliff, where rows of great ugly houses look out seaward from that height, and where the bastioned cliffs crumble and are cobbled horribly with brick and plaster. But one gets no joy of those grim grey buttresses that front the waves.

Passing, instead, up the main street, to the surviving Norman church of St. Lawrence, we note there the brasses to Nicholas Manston, wearing the Collar of SS.; and his daughter and wife. Then, down the lengthy Nethercourt Hill, we come to Pegwell Bay.

When the Tuggs family made holiday at Ramsgate they went, of course, to Pegwell Bay: famous then, as now, for its shrimps and for the various places where shrimp-teas, chiefly in little earwiggy arbours, might be obtained: "Mr. and Mrs. Tuggs and the Captain ordered lunch in the little garden—small saucers of large shrimps, dabs of butter, crusty loaves, and bottled ale." That is the ritual to be observed by all who,

coming to Pegwell Bay, want to do their duty by the place.

“ I know a shore where white cliffs face the sea,
Along the margin of a noble bay ;
Whose air resounds with nigger minstrelsy—
And motor-cars are tuppence all the way.

“ Ah ! there the sky is of an azure hue,
And aureate glow the yellow sands ;
‘ The ocean darkens to a deeper blue—
And everywhere are German bands.

“ I know an harbour where the jasmines twine,
Where creepers hang in folds and tresses limp,
Where gay convolvuli and eglantine
Dispute the odour of the fragrant shrimp.

“ There, where the spider weaves his silken net,
And earwigs crawl, and caterpillars creep,
Will you and I together hie, my pet,
For there they furnish teas extremely cheap.”

Pegwell Bay, as you will clearly perceive on maps, is a very considerable inlet. It marks, indeed, that nook in the coast-line where the old Wantsum Channel and the river Stour flowed along past Minster and Sarre, and emerged at Reculver, thus forming the Isle of Thanet. Tracking round from Pegwell and its shrimpy harbours, along the low shores, we come at Cliff's End to the “ Sportsman ” inn and Ebbsfleet, and, turning to the right, will presently find St. Augustine's Cross.

Ebbsfleet is a place of the greatest historic

interest ; a spot where many landings that contributed largely to the long story of England have taken place. Where these fruitful fields now spread there ebbcd and flowed, until well within the period of established history, those waters of the Wantsum which received the Stour and other streams, as shown in old maps, and divided Thanet from the mainland by a navigable channel with numerous creeks, or "fleets." An enormous mass of archæological writing has been expended upon the discussion of the exact site of Ebbsfleet. It has been sought to place it at Stonar, nearer Sandwich, among other places ; but popular tradition has always pointed to the site occupied by the modern memorial cross. The channel of the Wantsum, affording quiet anchorage from stormy seas and safe landing-places would obviously be the place to be made for by both friends and hostile visitors. Here, accordingly, tradition places the landing of the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa in A.D. 449, thirty-nine years after the departure of the Roman garrison, coming in reply to Vortigern's appeal to them to help him against the Picts and Scots. Following that first coming of those fierce men of the sæxe and the battleaxe were many other landings, few specifically mentioned in history. They came then, not as allies, but as enemies of the enfeebled Britons who had originally hired them to do their fighting. Thus we read that in A.D. 465 "Hengist and Æsc fought against the Welsh at Wippidsfleet, and there slew twelve

Welsh Ealdormen, and one of their own Thanes was slain whose name was Wipped."

For the original name of Ebbsfleet we have a fair choice. It was written "Wippidsfleet," "Hypwine's fleet," and "Ippedeflete"; but the essential name has survived through all the centuries.

It was 148 years after the first landing of the pagan Saxons that Augustine came ashore here, A.D. 596.

"Augustine's arrival was, it is more or less historically certain," says Sir F. C. Burnand, who will have his joke, even if ill-timed and painfully hammering it out, "in the last of the summer months, since he is invariably alluded to in ancient records as 'our august visitor.'" This is really lamentable.

Augustine was by merest chance the missionary to England. Gregory the Great, the Pope who sent him on the mission, had himself, when Deacon, intended to convert the heathen in our island. Gregory was not of the sour religious type, but something of a humorist, and a punster and torturer of words after Burnand's own fancy, only he did it better. The story is well known, how, seeing slaves from England sold in Rome, he asked from what country they came.

"They are Angles," replied the dealer.

"Not Angles, but angels, with faces so angel-like," said Gregory; "but from what country come they?"

"From Deira," was the answer.

“Deira,” rejoined Gregory; “well said, indeed. *De ira*, plucked from God’s ire and called to Christ’s mercy. But what is the name of their King?”

“Ælla,” the slave-dealer told him; and the Deacon was again equal to the occasion. “Alleluia,” he said, “shall be sung in Ælla’s land.”

At once he sought permission of the Pope to travel to that country whence those engaging pagans had come, to reconvert their land; and, having obtained it, set forth with a small following. He had not been gone more than the third day’s journey when, as the company rested at noon, a locust sprang upon the book he was reading. He saw an omen in it. “Rightly is it called *Locusta*,” said Gregory, “because it seems to say to us ‘*Loco sta*’; that is, ‘stay in your place. I see we shall not be able to finish our journey. But,” he added, strangely disregarding the omen his fancy had created, “rise, load the mules, and let us get on as far as we can.”

Before they had set out again came messengers who had ridden hastily from Rome to recall him: the people having missed their kindly Deacon. He returned, and never visited Britain. Years afterwards, when elected Pope, he was mindful of his old project, but was then compelled to send another on the mission that had lain so near his heart. That other was Augustine, and a most unwilling missionary he proved. He had not at any time wished to go, and departed from Rome with his forty companions only in obedi-

ence to his Sovereign Pontiff's commands. Arrived midway in France, the expedition heard tales so dreadful of the distant land to which they were bound that they sent Augustine back, by no means unwilling, to beg of Gregory that the project might be abandoned. Bede, in his "Ecclesiastical History," tells us "they were seized with craven terror, and began to think of returning home, rather than proceed to a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, to whose very language they were strangers." But it was precisely because they were unbelieving that Augustine was sent to them. Gregory would not hear of the mission being abandoned; and so Augustine was obliged, after all, to fulfil it.

Britain was not, however, so terrible a country, nor was Christianity unknown there. Ethelbert, the powerful King of Kent, was a pagan, but his French wife, Bertha, was a Christian, and her chaplain, Luidhard, who was a Bishop in France, officiated in a chapel identified with the early church of St. Martin at Canterbury. And, while the Saxon kingdoms were pagan, away in the westward recesses of Britain, in the land we now know as Wales, unconquered by the Saxon, the British remained true to the early Church of the fourth century.

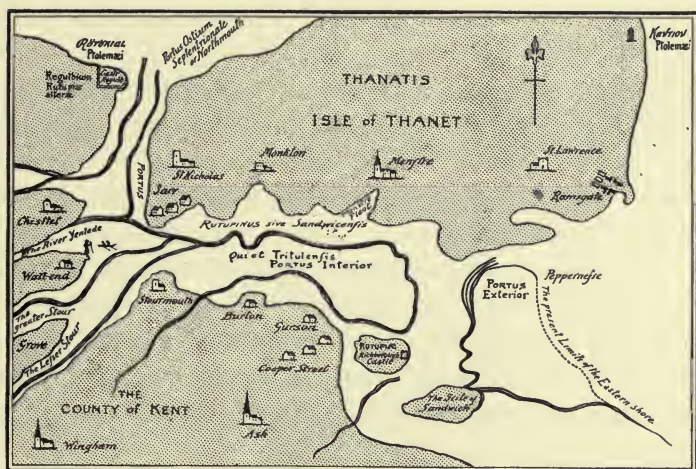
Gregory sent Augustine back, reluctant still, upon that business himself would so joyfully have gone, had it been possible. The mission at length landed here, at Ebbsfleet, and advanced into the centre of Thanet, where Ethelbert,

doubtful of them, but not unkindly, met them in the open air ; some say under an oak-tree, while others deny that oaks ever grew in the island. Painters have selected the striking incident of this meeting of the Saxon King and his soldiers with Augustine and his monks ; and that historic event lends itself admirably to the sense of drama, and to form and colour. A great silver cross was borne aloft before Augustine, and in company with it went an image of the Saviour done in paint and gilding on a board, much after the usage of the icons in the Greek Church to-day. Bringing the solemn chant that accompanied their march to an " Amen," the monks sat down to the conference between their leader and the King ; a conference conducted of necessity through interpreters, as neither understood the other's language.

In conclusion, the King gave leave for the missionaries to establish themselves at Canterbury. The words in which he is said to have done so are at once dignified and hospitable, even although we must make a good deal of allowance for the literary English in which the chroniclers have cast them : " Your words are fair, and your promises—but because they are new and doubtful, I cannot give my assent to them and leave the customs I have so long observed, with the whole Anglo-Saxon race. But because you have come hither as strangers from a long distance, and as I seem to myself to have seen clearly that what you yourselves believed to be true and good

you wish to impart to us, we do not wish to molest you ; nay, rather, we are anxious to receive you hospitably and give you all that is needed for your support ; nor do we hinder you from joining all whom you can to the faith of your religion."

Thus favourably began the work Augustine was sent to do. The place at Ebbsfleet where he set foot ashore was long held sacred and a myth speedily grew about it ; no less wild a story than that his foot had miraculously impressed itself upon the rock. If for "rock" we read "mud," which is much more likely to have been a feature of this shore, we shall have less difficulty in believing the story. A chapel was built over that wonderful footprint—which no doubt the monks in after-years had provided ; but, more wonderful still, it afterwards became known as the footprint of St. Mildred, who had landed at Ebbsfleet about a century later. I do not pretend to be able to reconcile the footprint of a man well over six feet high, as Augustine was represented to be, with that of a woman ; but who would seriously criticise the statements in fairy tales ? Not I, for one. The chapel disappeared at some unspecified time, and the marvellous footprint is said to have been broken up by roadmenders for road-metal in the first decade of the nineteenth century. This seems, for many reasons, a sad pity. One would joyfully barter the modern St. Augustine's Cross that stands hereby for such. This memorial, a very fine one, was set up in 1884, on the sup-



THANET AS AN ISLAND, SHOWING THE WANTSUM, FROM AN ANCIENT MAP.

posed site of the landing, where an ancient oak formerly stood. It rises eighteen feet and is elaborately sculptured on the model of the famous crosses at Sandbach, Cheshire. Close at hand (a very modern touch this) is "Ebbsfleet, Cliff's End, and St. Augustine's Cross" railway station: which rather discounts the romance of the spot.

The four miles onward to Sandwich are a dead level. In the dawn of history, when Thanet was still an island, and when ships bound to and from London sailed round the Wantsum channel, by Minster and Sarre, the sea rolled where now this road runs. It is an impressive thought, and renders this scenery more than a little romantic. As you proceed, with the reedy dykes on the right, towards the red, clustered roofs of Sandwich, ahead, there rise away across

the marshes to the right the grey, solitary walls of Richborough, the place that was once the Roman port and fortress of *Rutupiæ*, guarding this entrance of that ancient channel, just as *Regulbium* kept watch and ward at the other. The river Stour, which here flows in an extraordinary looped course, prevents access to Richborough this way, and one must come to it through Sandwich. No one, once arrived on that spot, can be insensible to its peculiar charm; the hoary walls, still in places some thirty feet high and ten feet eighteen inches thick, displaying the Roman construction of rubble and stone, alternating with courses of red brick. The walls form three sides of a square, the fourth side originally giving upon the water in those days when the Roman vessels anchored here at the quays. The area enclosed by these walls is ten acres, now under corn. A singular puzzle for archæologists, who have not yet explained the meaning of it, is the extraordinary subterranean passage, discovered in 1866, which runs beneath this enclosed area and is, in effect, a tunnel some five feet high, made of flints embedded in concrete. It has a right-hand elbow and ends abruptly. There is usually some one at hand with candle and matches, who is prepared, for a modest consideration, to conduct the visitor along this passage. Above this, in the centre of the station, is a concrete platform in the form of a cross. This, also, is a prime enigma to the inquiring mind. Some archæologists consider it to have been

the base on which was built a pharos, or light-house.

The mind of the contemplative visitor to this solitary spot dwells upon the contrast between the busy Roman port of sixteen hundred years ago and the remoteness of life from it now. Ivy of great age mantles the walls, and wheat grows ripe to harvest in the great field that was once a populous camp. All is changed, except the cliffs of Thanet, shining whitely in the distance ; and they, too, bear the burden of Ramsgate's sprawling streets, dimly made out against the skyline.

Hundreds of thousands of Roman coins have been dug up here, turned up by the plough, or just picked up from the wet earth, after rain. They were for the most part common copper *denarii*, but a great many silver coins, and some gold, have been found, not a few among them of great rarity. I have been fired by the story of these finds to seek for myself. Even a *denarius* would be something to have retrieved by one's own personal efforts from this site of an ancient civilisation. But nothing rewarded half a day's grubbing among the clods. 'Twas ever thus—yesterday, to-morrow, some one else, not to-day—not to ourselves. Oh the hard luck of it!

CHAPTER XV

SANDWICH

APPROACHING Sandwich, whose towers and rooftops rise picturesquely ahead from the level marshes, mingled with the masts and spars of a few vessels lying at the town quays, a belt of spindly trees is passed, stretching away to the left. They are trees of a considerable height and size, but they wear an ill-nourished appearance, as they cannot fail to do when we consider how poor the soil on which they grow. It is, in fact, nothing but sand and pebbles. One solitary residence, Stonar House, stands amid these weird woods. The spot keeps an air of reticence and melancholy, appropriate enough, for it is the site of a vanished town: the empty space where once stood and flourished the town and port of Stonar, or Lundenwic, an old, and at one time a greater and more prosperous, rival of Sandwich. Rarely ever has a town vanished so utterly as this. We first hear of it in A.D. 456, when the Britons routed the invading Saxons at a spot fixed by the old annalist "in a field close to the Inscribed Stone [*Lapis Tituli*, in the original Latin] on the shores of the Gallic sea." What

was that stone? No one can say. Here again was fought a battle: when Edmund Ironside defeated the Danes, in 1019.

Stonar was situated on an island at the mouths of the Stour and Wantsum. Some archæologists who are not satisfied with the generally received legend of Ebbsfleet believe it was here Augustine landed. The converted King Canute made a grant of it to St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury, and in the deeds accompanying the gift



FISHERGATE, SANDWICH.

we find it named "Estonores." The name should properly, no doubt, be spelled Stonor: the stone on the edge, or shore. Its *alias*, "Lundenwic," derived from its position on the then navigable channel of the Wantsum, on the short-cut round to the Thames and London by Reculver; "wic," like the "wich" of Sandwich, being the Norse *vik*, for bay or channel.

Sandwich was at last overtaking Stonar in the race for prosperity, and Stonar was already decaying when a great storm in 1365 overwhelmed the sandy island on which it was situated. This disaster had been to some extent retrieved when a French expedition landed in 1385 and burnt what had been rebuilt. Fate was too strong for that unfortunate port, and it then sank into utter oblivion. Antiquaries claim to have discovered the site of its church, but of buildings not the slightest traces remain above ground, and the sea that once destroyed it long ago rendered the site useless by retreating over a mile away.

Such is the history of Stonar, and almost to the same complexion have the vagaries of sea and sands brought its once successful rival, Sandwich.

The town of Sandwich is so comparatively little known that when its name arises it is first of sandwiches—ham or other—or of the Sandwich Islands, that one thinks; the ancient town taking the remote place of *tertium quid* and coming last. Yet, indirectly, Sandwich gave a name both to the eatables and the islands, by the inter-

mediary of the fourth Earl of Sandwich, that bright particular star among the rabbit-warren of ennobled Montagues in the eighteenth century who was known familiarly as "Jemmy Twitcher," and was great at the Admiralty, and greater perhaps as a gambler. In his honour Captain Cook named Hawaii and its archipelago the "Sandwich Islands"; and the gamester's intentness upon the hazards of play and disinclination from breaking off for meals led him to keep hunger off at the card-table by eating meat between slices of bread; called, after him, "sandwiches."

The ancient town and reverend Cinque Port of Sandwich is entered by a bridge across the Stour and thence by passing under the arch of the old Barbican, a curious outwork of the times when walls and gates were necessary for the town's security. The only other remaining gate is the Fishergate, along the same quay, built in 1578. The road from Ramsgate and the bridge across the Stour to the Barbican are comparatively modern innovations, the only entrance from this side being formerly by ferry to Fishergate. The bridge was first built in 1755, and is in part an iron swing-bridge, permitting the passage of small vessels to the upper quays. Against its parapets lean the idle, the born tired, and the infirm of Sandwich the livelong day; some staring into the water, or vaguely across the sandy flats; others facing north, expending a fascinated stare upon the activities of the

brewery, which is the busiest thing in the town. There are more imposing entrances than this to English towns; the bold gates and frowning towers of Canterbury and of York bring back mediævalism, a living thing; but no other approach is so truly quaint as that to Sandwich by the Barbican. Little, squatty round towers with their lower half chequered black and white in flint and stone, and their upper part finished with peaked roofs like witches' hats, give an effect almost unreal in their completely picturesque setting, with the curious tower of St. Peter's peering over the roof-tops. It is so rarely complete that you almost suspect it to be the lath-and-plaster and painted canvas building of the entrance, let us say, to a "Cinque Port Exhibition." But it is undeniably real, unquestionably genuine, and is but the introduction to much else of an old-world character that Sandwich contains.

Sandwich is a little town. For all its ancient importance—the Liverpool of olden times—it was never large, and the ancient, grassy ramparts that almost encircle it were at no time a hindrance to expansion. Mediæval Canterbury, in common with another walled city and town, threw out suburbs, which may be seen to this day outside the walls, looking almost the age of the original place; but Sandwich, however crowded it may have grown within the walls, had never any suburbs. A seaport at once so wealthy and prosperous, and so exposed to raids

from over-sea as was this in the olden days of fire and sword, could not afford to give such hostages to fortune as unprotected suburbs would be. The history of Sandwich, a tale of repeated burnings and pillagings, sufficiently shows that even behind its defences it could not withstand the many furious attacks made from time to time. Apart from the many such disasters of early times, of which history speaks but vaguely, we hear of the town being laid waste in 1046 by vikings; of damage done in 1052 by the rebel Earl Godwin, and of constant forays in mediæval times, including the burning by the French in 1216. It again suffered severely at the hands of the French in 1400, 1438, and 1457; and in 1470, in an attack by the rebel Earl of Warwick; and only when the power and prosperity of the port had decayed did the town know peace. "He who is low need fear no foe," truly says the jingling proverb.

To-day the size and shape of the town are what they always were. The ramparts still look out upon the open, level meadows, and not only are there no suburban developments, but there is even room within the ancient ceinture for expansion. It is a strange fall from ancient eminence.

We hear nothing of Sandwich before A.D. 665, when Wilfrid, Bishop of Northumbria, is recorded to have landed in the haven that then had apparently begun to make the fortune of the place. He came ashore "happily and pleasantly."

Richborough was already dead as a port, and the twin ports of Stonar and Sandwich were thriving upon its decay. Very rare and fragmentary are these early notices of Sandwich, and it is not until A.D. 851 that we again hear of it, in a severe defeat of invading Danes, administered by Athelstan. That date marks the beginning of an era of troubles caused by those fierce piratical Northerners, ending for a time only in 1016, when the Danes under Canute made themselves masters of the country. In all that century and a half the viking ships, with the dreaded device of the Black Raven, became, as we are told by a recent writer, "a familiar but always unwelcome sight." Unwelcome! Yes, indeed. A thought too mild, perhaps, that word; because we know those Danish pirates to have been so peculiarly unwelcome that when they were caught, their captors expressed their hatred by skinning them alive and nailing their hides upon the church-doors. Such treatment left no room for doubt.

In the defensive measures early undertaken against these marauding hosts some historians trace the first inception of that famous alliance of seashore towns known as the "Cinque Ports," among which, although Dover has always been accounted chief, Sandwich certainly makes the better figure in olden story. Of all those seaports in that brotherhood whose privilege it was to bear the proud and strange dimidiated arms of the half-lions and half-boats, Sandwich suffered more severely at the hands of the foreigner, it

was more honoured, it rose to loftier heights of prosperity, made greater sacrifices, and in the end its decay was the more marked. It will be convenient here to concisely tell the story of those ports.

The Cinque Ports, as a confederacy, arose from an early necessity for guarding the south coast against the sea-rovers and other piratical hordes out of the north of Europe, who began to harry these shores so early as the time of the Romans. In the later years of the Roman occupation of Britain, when the grip of that masterful people was growing enfeebled with luxurious habits, and when not even the twin great fortresses of *Regulbium* and *Rutupiæ* sufficed to overawe those fierce strangers, it had been found necessary to provide especially for the defence of these ports, and to appoint a commander whose particular charge the great stretch of coast from Yarmouth, down past the Thames and Medway, and so on to the Kentish and Sussex coasts, should be. This official was the *Comes littoris Saxonici*, that is to say, the "Count of the Saxon Shore."

This warden of the coasts was not ill provided with fortresses. There were, in all, nine. In addition to *Regulbium* and *Rutupiæ*, there was the like defence of *Garianonum*, now known as Burgh Castle, near Yarmouth; *Branodunum*, Brancaster in Norfolk; *Othona*, now known as St. Peter's-on-the-Wall, near Bradwell, Essex; the original castle at Dover, *Portus Lemanis*, now Lympne; *Anderida*, Pevensey; and *Portus Adur-*

ni. The fortunes of the various Counts of the Saxon Shore are unknown. All records are lost in the final overthrow of civilisation after the departure of the Romans, and when the conquering Saxons had established themselves here, they were strong enough for a long time to hold what they had made their own, without the necessity for vigilant defence of the coast. It was only when the Saxons, in their turn, had begun to feel the effects of ease and luxury, and when they, too, had suffered from piratical rovers, that coast-defence again became urgent. And the protection of our shores has been, more or less, a matter of urgency ever since, and so remains.

But not until the time of Edward the Confessor did the actual confederation of the Cinque Ports come into existence, and not until after the Conquest do we hear with any certainty of it. It is not clear, amid the mists of antiquity from which this history emerges, whether the ports concerned took the initiative or whether the duty of providing ships and men for the King's use (or for national defence, as we might nowadays express it) was laid upon them against their will. But the privileges and exemptions granted to these associated ports in return for their supply of ships, men, and munitions amply recouped the cost of the service imposed upon them. The original Cinque Ports were Dover, Sandwich, Hastings, Hythe, and Romney. At a later period Rye and Winchelsea were added, under the special designation of the "Ancient Towns." Each

port had its subsidiary "members." Thus the "members" attached to Dover were Margate, Folkestone, Faversham, and St. Peter's, Broadstairs. Those belonging to Sandwich were Deal, Walmer, Stonar, Ramsgate, Sarre, Reculver, Fordwich, and Brightlingsea, away in Essex; to which Great Yarmouth in Norfolk and Dunwich in Suffolk may perhaps be added, although Dunwich was early swept away by encroachment of the sea, and Yarmouth, as a place of considerable size, fully conscious of its own dignity, always resented the authority assumed by Sandwich over its fishery, and eventually, in 1663, won its complete independence.

Romney comprised Lydd, Dungeness, East-weston, and Promwell; Hythe took in merely West Hythe, and to Hastings belonged the remote and completely inland village of Bokesbourne.

The story of the Cinque Ports is, above all else, an object-lesson in the supreme, although generally unacknowledged, importance of the trading, or middle classes, without whose enterprising activities and courage and resource the nation long since would have ceased to exist. It has always been convenient to ignore the services to the community performed by traders, who on the one hand give employment and on the other pay the greater proportion of rates and taxes, and from whose enriched families the failing and impoverished aristocracy has throughout the centuries been recruited.

Although, as already said, the idea of the Cinque Ports confederation goes back into dim antiquity, we have few early facts. The first Warden of whom we have any certain information is John de Fiennes, in the time of William the Conqueror, and the earliest charter extant is that of 1277, the sixth year of the reign of Edward the First. By that document we learn something of the status and scope of this remarkable association. Those ports were among the richest communities at that time within the kingdom. They no longer suffered, as of yore, from pirates, although they were the first to feel the vengeance of the foreigner when war broke out; and thus they were not so immediately concerned as of old in guarding their own shores. But the King in those times, before such a thing as a royal navy had come into existence, had need of ships wherewith to conduct his foreign wars, and the merchant-vessels of Sandwich, of Dover, and of these other maritime communities were the only craft then available. Not even in those high-handed feudal times was it possible to seize ships at will; some centuries earlier a compact had been made with the ports, which were then definitely associated. They undertook to supply vessels, according to their relative importance. Thus under Henry the Third, in 1229, the Cinque Ports, as a whole, were to furnish fifty-seven ships, each with a crew of twenty-one men and a boy (a "gromet," or "garcion," as he was called) for fifteen days, at

their own cost ; and as long afterwards as might be required, on pay. The varied importance of the contributory ports seems to be reflected in the ships each then contracted to supply towards the tally. Thus Dover is set down for twenty-one ; Winchelsea ten ; Hastings six ; and Sandwich, Hythe, Romney, and Rye five each.

Thus early were the merchants able to find a fleet for the King's needs ; and they obtained substantial return for the service. The Cinque Ports were given many valuable rights and privileges within and without their own boundaries. They were governed under a Lord Warden by a representative body of men freely chosen from each port, and were independent alike of the counties and of the King's writ, and directly represented in Parliament and at the coronation of King and Queen. In place of the aldermen and councillors of municipal corporations, the freemen of the ports were styled "barons" and "jurats." The right to govern one's own affairs was not recognised in those times, and the concession granted to the freemen of the Cinque Ports was therefore of considerable value. They were, moreover, given a privilege that would be extremely valuable even now : that of trading free of toll everywhere throughout the kingdom. They were, in the words of Edward the First's charter, "quit of all toll and custom, all lastage, tollage, passage, carriage, rivage, and pontage." They had also the more abstruse rights of "Soc and sac, infangtheoff and utfangtheoff, wardship

and marriage of heirs," and were freed from the King's right of prisage of imported wines.

The Cinque Ports navy, thus constituted, performed great services during several centuries. It not only conveyed the King's troops in his wars with France, and Scotland, and in his subjugations of Ireland and Wales, but fought with, and generally vanquished, foreign fleets. It was only with the gradual growth of a royal navy, from the time of Henry the Seventh, that the importance of the Cinque Ports flotilla declined.

Its gradual declension was due rather to a rage for building big warships than to any decay in the ports. Much the same forces were at work then as those we see now. The Cinque Ports vessels were, in the first instance, merchantmen, and when they had performed their military service they resumed their trade. The great ships of war built by Henry the Eighth, the *Mary Rose* and the *Harry Grace à Dieu*, were the Dreadnoughts of their age, and led to competitive building on the part of foreign Powers. Among those leviathans the trading vessels of the ports seemed insignificant; although it was left for a much later age to prove that the fishing luggers of the Kentish coast could perform useful acts; as when they were armed during the scare of Napoleon's projected invasion, and succeeded in capturing some French gunboats and putting privateers to flight.

With the decline of their especial usefulness,

and with the growth everywhere of liberties, the peculiar privileges of the Cinque Ports either became anomalous or absolutely worthless, and so at length the office of Lord Warden grew more and more a mere ornamental distinction, generally conferred upon a statesman towards the close of his career. The honour is generally the coping-stone placed upon the achievements of public life. Together with the decline of this once great office, the various courts held for the conduct of Cinque Ports business have either ceased to exist or are brought into an effete and unwonted activity only on rare occasions, such as the Installation of a Lord Warden, or a coronation, when the "barons" claim their ancient rights of carrying a canopy over King and Queen. All these changes had come gradually about at the time when reform generally was in the air, in the first half of the nineteenth century, and most of these especial privileges were formally abolished by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835.

Sandwich was severely governed in mediæval times by its authorities, the "jurats or barons," but not one whit more severely than other members of the Cinque Ports. The "common ordinances" proclaimed by authority of these jurats included a curious variety of enactments. No burgess was permitted to lend any money to spinners of wool on security of their wool, nor to tailors on their cloth; no dealer in fish was allowed to buy any fish in the market from a foreign fisherman, and no poulterer might pur-

chase any poultry from a foreigner "until the better sort of people of the town had supplied themselves with what they wanted for their own use." "Foreigner" in these cases meant merely a person who was not an inhabitant of Sandwich, not an alien.

Furthermore, any person who should wound another maliciously with knife, sword, or the like, had the choice either of paying the Mayor and commonalty sixty shillings, of going to prison for a year and a day, or of having his hand perforated by the weapon with which the wound was inflicted. Any woman convicted of scolding or quarrelling in the street, or any public place, was to carry "the mortar," a kind of pillory, through the town, beginning and ending at the pillory gate, and preceded by a piper, to whom she was to pay a penny for his music. The jurats had also power of life and death for offences that would now be considered of only a minor kind. The women condemned to die were drowned in the Guestling Brook; the men buried alive in the Thieves Dunes, near by.

The treacherous receding of the sea, which, in leaving Richborough high and dry, had ruined that original port and created Sandwich, was in course of time to serve Sandwich in the like manner. Its period of greatest prosperity would appear to have been about 1470. It had then ninety-five vessels and 1,500 sailors, and the customs revenue of the port was £17,000, equal to about twenty times that sum in present values.

But the drifting sands soon afterwards began to create difficulties in the haven ; and when, about 1535, a large vessel belonging to Pope Paul the Fourth was sunk, by accident or design, in the harbour it caused so serious a shoal that not all the efforts of the townspeople could remove it. By 1640 the haven was a thing of the past, but for close upon two centuries and a half hopes were entertained of reopening it. At an early stage in these troubles foreigners were had over from Holland to deal with the sands, and petitions were from time to time presented to Queen Elizabeth and to Parliament. And still the sandbanks accumulated, and by that time, late in the eighteenth century, when the Government sent down engineers to plan and estimate and report, it was discovered that nothing less than a cut nearly two miles long, at a cost of about £360,000, would serve. That project never progressed beyond the report stage, and Sandwich has long been resigned to its fate. The distance to the sea, in a direct line, is now two miles, across sandy water, partly grown with grass ; and ships coming up the Stour to Sandwich quays have to negotiate a winding course of nearly four miles from the sea.

But it would be a mistake to assume that Sandwich was immediately ruined by the closing of its haven. It so happened, about the time when the sands were first closing in, in the reign of Elizabeth, that religious persecution in the Netherlands was harassing the industrious

Flemish and French peoples whose commercial and industrial genius had made the fortunes of that land. England's textile and weaving trades were poor in comparison with those of the Continent, and it was a far-seeing statesmanship, as much as a fellow religious feeling, that induced Elizabeth to grant the petition of the oppressed weavers of bays and says, and other craftsmen in 1565, and afford them an asylum from the ferocious persecution carried on by the Spaniards in the Low Countries. Archbishop Parker well named the Dutch and French refugees who by command of that great Queen were permitted to settle in Sandwich, "gentle and profitable strangers." Unlike the often diseased, verminous, and generally vicious, ignorant, and tradeless aliens whose free entry into the England of to-day is so rightly resented, those immigrants brought with them, in addition to cleanly and industrious and law-abiding habits, the mastery of trades and techniques that England lacked. They were indeed profitable to the State, and they largely saved Sandwich from such complete extinction as that which has befallen Romney and Winchelsea.

This community originally numbered some four hundred persons, and formed a class apart, with two chapels, a Flemish and a French, for their own use. Their textile trades thrived, and sent forth colonies to Colchester and other places ; and, among other crafts, they introduced market-gardening. Incidentally, also, they taught the

wasteful and the riotous English a new mode of life. I suppose those two chief races that mainly go towards the making of the English people—the Celts and the Anglo-Saxons—have wastefulness and a love of drink in common, however else they differ. But these strangers added sobriety and prudence to their industry, and brought much housekeeping cleverness with them. It is but one example of their methods, but characteristic, that they were the first to introduce ox-tail soup. The English butchers had always disposed of the tails with the hides, but these newcomers had long known their value and bought them cheaply, in the way of their housekeeping, until the English aptitude to learn at other people's expense sent up the price of those neglected appendages. It is quite in keeping with the contrary nature of people and affairs that it was after a time sought to discriminate unfavourably in taxation against these people who had brought such benefits into the land. How matters would eventually have shaped does not appear, for at that juncture the strangers had begun to mingle with the English. They intermarried and lost their foreign tongues, and, such is the English power of assimilation, their very names have suffered similar changes. Thus, although to this day many names in Sandwich are in their origin Dutch or French, they have been altered so greatly, following the original English inability to pronounce them, that they appear, on the face of them, sufficiently

British. All the poetry in them has been obliterated in the process, and they have become quaint or grotesque. But those typical Sandwich names, "Gutterbock" and "Poisson," are in their original form.

The textile trades in time deserted Sandwich, and at last left it to a gentle sleep; and so it has drowsed away the last centuries. It is not the "dead town" it is commonly reported to be, and by no means to be judged by Cobbett's uncomplimentary reference in 1823: "Sandwich, which is a rotten borough. Rottenness, putridity, is excellent for land, but bad for boroughs." It was political rottenness that aroused his indignation; but that was no especial attribute of Sandwich, and therefore he need not have continued with the remark, "as villainous a hole as one would wish to see."

Wish *not* to see, he doubtless meant, for nobody desires to see villainous holes. But Sandwich was not of his political creed, hence this fury.

So much has been said of Sandwich as a "dead town" that strangers who first come to it full of the tales they have heard, of grass growing in its streets—and, for all I know, moss growing on its inhabitants—are likely to be surprised at its comparative vitality. Grass does not grow like a lawn in the streets of Sandwich, in spite of all the far-fetched stories of decay and desolation that it pleases eloquent descriptive writers to tell, and it is something of a shock to find a

quite busy railway station just outside the ramparts and a very modern "Stores" in whose windows are all sorts of twentieth-century provisions, for which modern coin of the realm, and not the quaint moneys of Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth, must be tendered. All these signs, including the occasional motor-cars that hurry through the narrow streets, are very reassuring, or very disastrous, according to your point of view.

At Sandwich, which is supposed (in the pages of those super-eloquent writers aforesaid) to have given up the ghost long ago, but has done nothing of the kind, there should certainly be no railway, and there should be no room in a "dead" town for the gasworks which may be seen—and smelt—on the quay, nor for the particularly large and busy brewery in Strand Street. At the mediæval Sandwich, thus pictured, the few remaining shopkeepers should stand in their doorways and address passers-by with "What d'ye lack, my masters?" but they don't; and the thirsty wayfarer will call in vain for a posset of sack, a beaker of canary or malvoisie at the "Red Lion" or "King's Arms." Beshrew me, sirs, but he will need to content himself with a whisky-and-soda, mineral-waters, or the product of the local brewery already mentioned. I have no doubt, could he sample the old-style drinks, he would greatly prefer the modern.

If one really wishes to see a dead town, Winchelsea, or New Romney, or, better still, Old Romney, may be recommended. They are much

more dead—if it be in any way possible to institute degrees in these things—than Sandwich.

But the census returns of a hundred years ago, compared with those of 1911, prove an increase of population in the town. They at the same time disclose how small a place it is. The population in 1801 was 2,452 ; in 1901 it had risen to 3,170 ; but the 1911 census reveals a decline of 130.

There is no grand architecture, of the wonder-compelling kind, in Sandwich. It is all very quiet and modest and domestic, but at the same time old-world and reverend. Of the three parish churches, St. Clement's, which stands hard by the place where the ancient sea-front of Sandwich once opened out, is the most notable, and has a fine Norman tower. The restoration it has experienced was paid for by the sale of its bells—a quaint touch—and a modern set of tube-chimes now replaces them. St. Peter's is perhaps better known, because its tower is taller and is capped with a curious Dutch-like turret, and rising to a considerable height, viewed from a distance, across the flats, it is the most prominent feature of the town. The tower is frankly and unashamedly unarchitectural, and replaces the one that fell without warning on October 13th, 1661. It fell disastrously into the church and demolished the south aisle, making a mighty heap of wreckage. "The rubidge," says the contemporary account, "was three fathoms deep in the middle of the church." The roofless walls of that de-

stroyed aisle remain in part to this day. The tower that replaces the fallen building is of a local grey brick made from the harbour mud, and would appear from its style to have been designed and built by a local journeyman bricklayer. But it is to be hoped that the modern passion for remodelling plain buildings and putting them into a conventional dress will pass this tower of St. Peter's by; for Sandwich would scarce seem the same Sandwich without it, and people who write about the town would lose the cherished chance of being mildly funny at its expense.

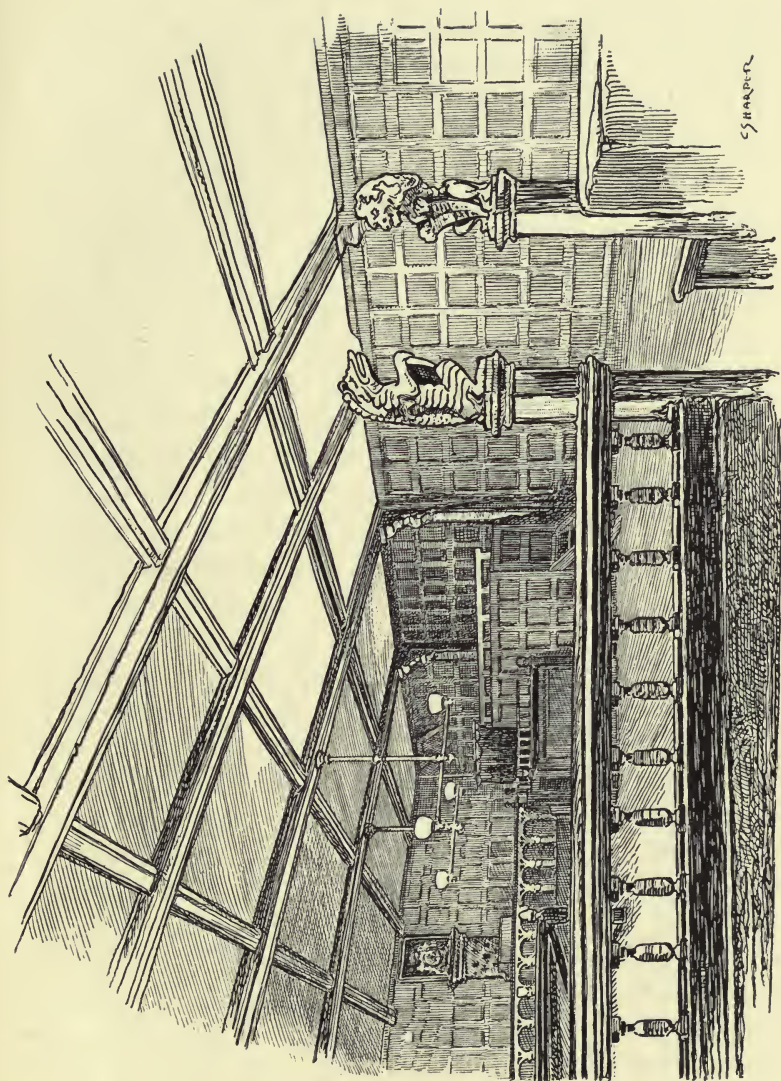
I do not think any stranger has ever been known to find his way through Sandwich without making one or two false turns, for its streets are winding and deceptive. The houses of the middle ages are not represented in them at all, and it is a sixteenth and seventeenth-century Sandwich you see, not the mediæval port. It is, in general, a Dutch effect, as if those settlers under Elizabeth had imported their views upon domestic architecture and had successfully imposed them upon the town.

The native of Sandwich who has left his mark most visibly upon the place is Sir Roger Manwood, who founded the Grammar School in 1563. Manwood was born 1525, son of a local draper, and, entering the law, became eventually Chief Baron of the Exchequer. An elaborate new school-building, built 1895, stands in a solitary position outside the town, at the very opposite end from the original school, now occupied as

a private residence and named Manwood Court. It stands at the very extremity of Sandwich, as you go towards Canterbury, and is a very striking building, with five gables and a high-pitched roof, and the date, 1564, in great figures, sprawling in genuine sixteenth-century ironwork along the frontage. Queen Elizabeth, on her visit to Sandwich in 1572, when she was elaborately entertained by the town, honoured Sir Roger by staying at his house.

For the rest, there are dim, odd corners, where queer old timber angle-posts, carved with grinning and demoniacal figures, start out of the houses. Such an one is that which forms the chief adornment of the "King's Arms" inn and is dated 1592.

The Town Hall is a curious old building within, although refaced and rendered commonplace without. In it are held the Quarter Sessions for Sandwich and the Liberties of Ramsgate, Walmer, and Sarre. Brightlingsea's law-cases were also formerly held here; and the Mayor of that Essex seaport still has his chain of office placed on him here by his overlord, the Mayor of Sandwich. Another mayoral peculiarity is the black wand, instead of the usual white one, presented by the clerk to his Worship on his assuming office. The town traditionally thus went into mourning after the battle of Bloody Point. As this took place in the year 851, it is quite evident that the men of Sandwich are people with long memories, whom it would be an ill business



C. HARPER

THE TOWN HALL, SANDWICH.

to offend. The Sessions Hall and police-court is a fine old room, the court being entered past two weird old sculptured heraldic figures, a lion and a dragon sitting up on their rumps and holding shields. These are survivals of the town's decorations when Queen Elizabeth visited it, the dragon being, of course, the ancient Dragon of Wales. A number of pictures of curious interest seen in the Mayor's Parlour were found in 1839, during some alterations to a house in Harnet Street. They represent the battle of Sole (Southwold) Bay, the reception of Queen Elizabeth, etc. The jury-box in the Sessions Court is worth notice. It is one which used formerly to be set up at the opening of the Court, and taken down at the conclusion of business, when its parts were fitted into the panelling which lines the walls. Thus arose the expression of "empanelling" a jury.

There is now a stir in the old streets of Sandwich. Somewhere about 1887 some enthusiastic golfers discovered in the widespreading sands an ideal site for links on which to play that "royal and ancient" game, at that time scarce known, even by name, to the generality of Englishmen; and speedily the St. George's Golf Club, since granted the prefix of "Royal," was established, on land—or rather sand—leased and eventually purchased, from the Earl of Guilford, to whom the sea, in closing the career of Sandwich as a port, has gracefully presented this truly "un-earned increment." The present club-house was

formerly Great Downs Farm. Recently the trustees of the Earl of Guilford have constructed a "private" road from Sandwich, across the sandy wastes, to the sea, where they have erected a smart hotel, chiefly for golfers, on what was the solitary shore. Sometimes, when the golfers have bored each other almost to extinction with bragging of their remarkable feats on the course, they lounge into Sandwich and patronise it. To those who do not play golf all these developments are hateful and infuriating, and the players seem to be persons who pretend at exercise, rather than putting themselves to any real exertion; and on that score very inferior to cricketers. Meanwhile the boys and growing lads of Sandwich employed as "caddies" are being bred up to be idle, vicious, and unemployable men.

CHAPTER XVI

WORTH—UPPER DEAL—DEAL—THE GOODWIN SANDS

THE old road from Sandwich to Deal ran across the sandy wastes through which the railway goes, but the sand-dunes that line the shore all the way between the towns, and stretch far inland, form a profound discouragement to those who would seek to trace the seashore. Maps rightly mark this space of coast "Blown Sand." Blown it is, into hollows and heights, sometimes overgrown with a scanty herbage and thus anchored securely against being moved on again by the winds; but often mere loose sand-heaps that will be changed radically in shape by the next furious gale. It is distressing walking, and plaguy ill-favoured to boot; and where the sand at last dies away inland and gets mixed up with marshes, is about as easy and as awkward a place to get lost in as may well be imagined. The railway between Sandwich and Deal cuts midway through this swampy desolation.

The modern road to Deal lies open and unfenced for the most part, first across samples of these marshes, and then across chalk downs. It is a pleasant highway, where you get just as



UPPER DEAL.

much of the dykes and waterlogged scenery as you want, without a depressing surfeit of it. By the time the turning for Worth is reached the shore is nearly three miles distant. Here a signpost directs on the left "To Word," a spelling which reproduces the olden Saxon pronunciation of "Worth," still current here; all one with the singular inability of the Kentish folk to enunciate "th"—a strange and widespread trick of the tongue which makes the rustics talk of "de wedder," instead of the weather. The effect upon strangers is almost that of talking to foreigners. The word "shibboleth" itself would certainly bewray them; they would inevitably make it "shibboled."

"Worth" is pure Anglo-Saxon: deriving from "Weorthig," meaning an enclosure. The site of it was evidently a very early attempt at cultivation in these marshes.

We will not penetrate beyond Worth to the shore, the sands, and marshes, to the site of the old road, but will proceed along the present highway to Deal, through Shoulden.

The town of Deal is entered through what might at first be considered the inland modern suburb of Upper Deal, where the very striking red-brick seventeenth-century tower of St. Lawrence's church confronts the wayfarer. But what is now "Upper" Deal is in fact the original place: the "Addelam" of Domesday, the "Dole" of earlier records. The place-name, which signifies a "dale," is singularly appropriate for the spot

where the rolling chalk hills descend to a long level, stretching to the sea. Before there was any town at all where Deal now faces the Channel, almost awash with the tides, "Upper" Deal was simply "Deal," and what we now know as Deal was the upstart settlement called "Lower" Deal. Thus oddly is the situation reversed.

A curious piece of evidence as to the comparatively recent origin of the town is found in a Chancery case argued in 1663, when a witness seventy-two years of age declared that "he well knew the valley where Lower Deal is situated, and that he knew it before any house had been built there."

The church of St. Lawrence is a singular mixture within, and has a singing gallery, quaintly painted with an East Indiaman in full sail, and bearing the date 1705; together with little pictures of pilots and terrestrial globes, and the inscription: "This Gallery was built by ye Pilots of Deal." It will be noted that, in the construction of this road into Deal, the old Dutch-like houses here have suffered some mutilation.

It is a mile-long affair of incredibly mean streets from Upper Deal to the seashore. When the town arose from these levels in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it came into existence as a place of ship-chandlers and purveyors, and grubbed along in a kind of squalid, casual prosperity which apparently no one expected to last. Hence the little grey-brick houses, that seem to

have been built with small confidence in the future. Here and there, however, you find some charmingly designed old shop-fronts and fan-lights, in the nicest taste, unobtrusive but in just proportion.

The church of Deal, dedicated to St. George the Martyr, and dating only from the time of Queen Anne, is just the type of building one would expect from that date : red brick, with factory-like windows and a cupola-crowned clock turret. But it is a good and well-proportioned specimen of its class. Something of the fine old salty flavour of the tarry-breeched sailors of Nelson's day belongs to the two epitaphs that may be found against the walls. The first is to—

“ John Ross and James Draper, Seamen, who were killed on board H.M.S. *Naiad* in defeating the French Flotilla off Boulogne in the presence of Buonaparte, 21st September 1811. Their Shipmates caused this Monument to be erected to the memory of these truly good Men, who so nobly fell in the just cause of their Country.”

The other reads :

“ Sacred to the Memory of David Browne, late a Seaman on board his Majesty's Ship *Immortalité*, who died of wounds received in action with the Division of the French Flotilla off Cape Blanc Nez, 23rd of October 1804. Likewise of James Wilson, William Terrent, John Dewall, and George Bacher, Seamen, who lost their lives on the same occasion. Of William

Panrucker, Seaman, killed 6th Sept. 1804, John Egerton, Marine, killed 17th February 1804, and of James Redout, Seaman, killed 5th Nov. 1803. This is erected by their Shipmates. They were brave good Men and fell at that Post their Country had affigned Them."

Deal, in the opinion of Cobbett, was "a most villainous place. It is full of filthy-looking people. Great desolation of abomination has been going on here; tremendous barracks, partly pulled down and partly tumbling down, and partly occupied by soldiers. Everything seems upon the perish. I was glad to hurry along through it, and to leave its inns and public-houses to be occupied by the tarred and trowsered, and blue-and-buff crew whose vicinage I always detest." The "tarred and trowsered crew" in his time were very largely smugglers of the most ingenious type. They smuggled in the most incredible places, and it is even recorded that the Deal boatmen wore bustles, in which they packed vast quantities of tea and tobacco. The visitor of to-day, noting that the Deal boatmen are already provided by nature with a very extensive area in the region on which bustles are worn, will smile at the quaint picture that must have been presented by these bold dealers in contraband.

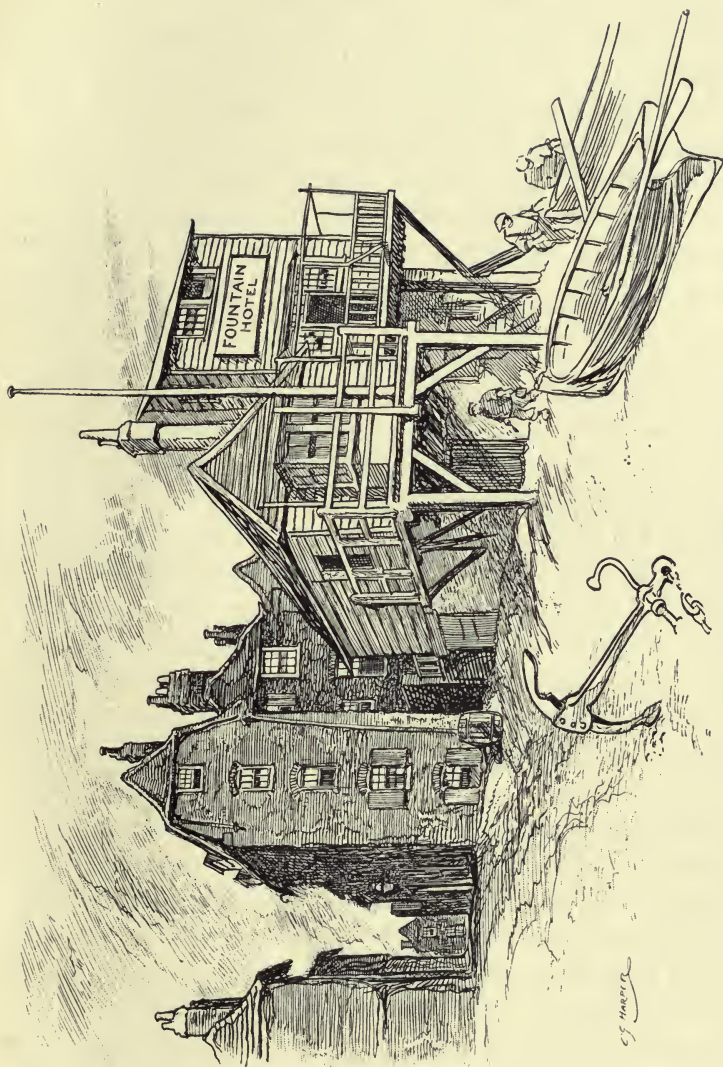
Julius Cæsar landed at Deal, in his invasion of Britain, B.C. 55, and again in the following year; and Perkin Warbeck chose the same spot in 1495. The low, shingly beach afforded an easy landing-place; and hence, when invasion was

expected in the reign of Henry the Eighth, Deal was one of the earliest places to be fortified.

History speaks with many voices on the subject of Henry the Eighth. That is partly because history is the sport of partisans, and partly because the character of that King is so complex. The view that he was all bloodthirsty tyrant and sensualist is easily taken. His amazing marriages, and still more amazing dissolutions of marriage, contribute largely to that estimate of him. But there were several Henrys in that one portly body. There was the avaricious, greedy Henry, own son of the mean Henry the Seventh ; the vain and luxurious and spendthrift Henry ; the proud and cruel Henry, a true Welsh Tudor ; and the statesman and patriot, whose existence few acknowledge. Whatever were his faults and errors, Englishmen to this day owe more to Henry the Eighth than to many a later monarch. He it was who established the Royal Navy, who had the courage to break with Rome and to free England from the deadly embrace of that Church ; and he spared no effort to arm his country against the political alliances the Pope sought to direct against it.

Says Hall, the Chronicler :

“ The King’s Highness, which never ceased to study and take pains both for the advancement of the commonwealth of this his realm of England, of the which he was the only supreme governor, and also for the defence of all the same, was lately informed by his trusty and faithful friends



THE QUAIN FORESHORE OF DEAL.

that the cankered and cruel serpent, the Bishop of Rome, by that arch-traitor Reignold Poole, enemy to God's word and his natural country, had moved and stirred divers great princes and potentates of Christendom to invade the realm of England, and utterly to destroy the whole nation of the same. Wherefore His Majesty, in his own person, without any delay, took very laborious and painful journeys towards the sea-coasts."

The results of these journeys was the building in 1539 of what Lambarde describes as "castles, platfourmes, and blockhouses in all needfulle places of the Realme." Some of these we may still see, here and at Walmer, Sandgate, Camber, and along the south coast, far away into Cornwall. These "bulwarks," as they are styled in the records of the time, were designed by Van Hassenperg, a German military architect, and all bore outwardly much the same appearance, consisting of portly, but low, masonry towers clustered at intervals round a stout curtain-wall and pierced with lunettes for guns. Islanded within the centre of this enclosure was a keep and gun-platform, rising to a somewhat greater height than the outer works. Although of one general appearance, there were minor differences in the outer aspect of these coast defences, and the ground-plan of each was markedly individual. Deal Castle, long since become a private residence, still stands to the west of the town. It wears much the same exterior appearance, although its moat is planted with shrubs.

The narrow alleys that lead on to the beach at Deal, and the ramshackly old houses and hovels from whose windows one might almost indulge in sea-fishing, seem almost like provocative impertinences to the waves, which appear always to be threatening them. But there they remain, the most whimsical of dwellings, with the spars and bowsprits of vessels almost poking in at the windows, greatly to the amusement of summer visitors.

The visitor to Deal who does not partake of at least one Deal "hoffkin" is not considered to have done his duty by the place. There is, however, nothing especially delightful in one of these strangely named articles. A "hoffkin" may be purchased at any baker's shop, at the price of one penny, and is nothing more than ordinary breadstuff (except that it appears to be a good deal harder, and not so palatable) baked in the shape of a teacake. It is about the size of a saucer, and has a hole in the middle. And why any baker makes such a thing, and how it came by its name, is an unrevealed mystery.

Half a mile north of Deal once stood the castle of Sandown, one of Henry the Eighth's many shoreward castles. They had no opportunity of fighting the foe, and their history has thus been meagre; but to this fortress of Sandown belonged one grim incident. It was selected as the prison of that convinced regicide, Colonel Hutchinson, sometime member of Parliament for Nottingham, who was at first pardoned on

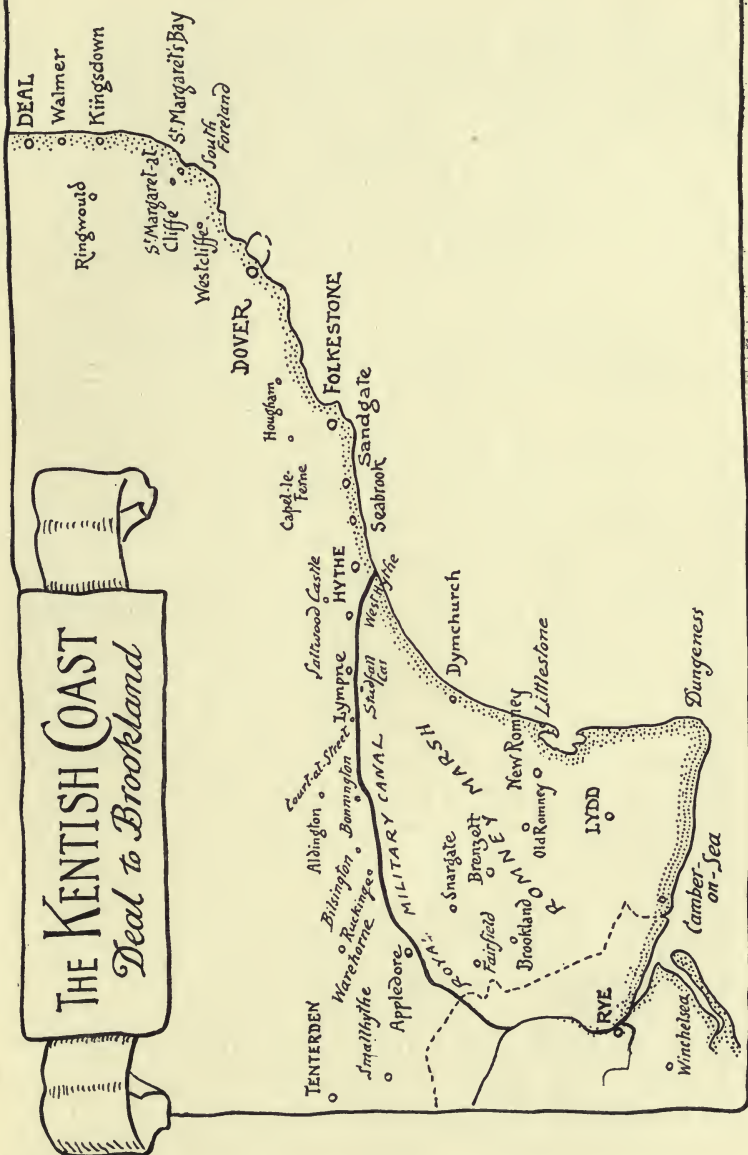
the Restoration, and then, in 1663, arrested and sent to the Tower of London. Removed to a solitary imprisonment here in May 1664, his wife and daughter were only permitted to visit him from Deal. According to the "Memoirs" written by his wife, Sandown Castle was even then a "lamentable old ruined place, not weatherproof, unwholesome and damp," and he died in four months, September 11th, aged forty-nine, from a fever with which it had infected him.

Sandown Castle is a thing of the past. Only the black memory of it remains. It was gradually undermined by the sea, and fell in massive ruinous blocks of masonry, unsung, unwept, with no story save that of a sordid and cruel and useless revenge.

The explorer who pushes manfully into these sandy wastes will scarce find that they repay him for his trouble and fatigue. A squalor pervades them, in addition to their essential melancholy; and when a kind of golf club-house has been passed and you come upon a small stone with a barely decipherable inscription, set upon a bank that marks where the sands and the marshes begin, and are told that it marks the site of a murder done there, long ago, you feel it to be a fitting place for such a deed. Here a young woman named Mary Bax was murdered in 1784 by a sailor tramping this way, along the old road to Sandwich. A boy roaming in the marshes saw the crime committed, and hid trembling in the rushes of a dyke, for fear that if he were

THE KENTISH COAST

Deal to Brookland



seen he would be served the same. When the man had gone he raised an alarm, and the countryside was roused. The sailor was tracked to Folkestone and captured in the churchyard of St. Eanswythe. The following account of the affair, and of the conviction and execution of the murderer, appeared in the *Annual Register* for 1784 :

“ Martin Laas, a sailor, was in April convicted of murdering a young woman at Worde, near Sandwich. Throughout the whole of his trial he treated the witnesses very insultingly, and gave three loud cheers before he was removed from the dock. Upon this, the Judge gave strict orders for him to be chained to the floor of his dungeon, where he afterwards confessed the crime. He said that on August 25th, as he was sitting on a roadside bank near the halfway house, between Deal and Sandwich, Mary Bax passed by, upon which he followed her, and in half a mile stopped her and inquired the way to Sheerness. She told him he was a great way from that place ; whereupon he said he had no money, and must have some. She had none, she said, for him. He then pushed her into a ditch, and jumped after her, into the mud and water, which reached to the middle of him. Taking the bundle she was carrying, and removing the shoes from her feet, he made off across the marshes, towards Dover. The shoes he immediately threw away, and hid the bundle near where he was taken.

“ The prisoner, giving this account, did not

seem to feel the least concern for the crime, or its consequences, but appeared, on the contrary, very cheerful, saying he had been fated to commit it, and to suffer for it, as he had been told, years before, by an old Spaniard.

“He was a native of Bergen, in Norway, twenty-seven years of age, and had served under Lord Rodney, in H.M.S. *Fame*, for upwards of two years. He was, however, extremely penitent when brought to the place of execution, acknowledged the justice of his sentence, and prayed with great fervency.”

Deal is all very well in summer, but it is in winter and in spring a desperately cold place. It is as though winter, departing reluctantly with the coming of the vernal equinox, lingered fondly here, loth to go. Thanet is open to the east winds, and every gust that blows out of the North Sea is felt acutely at Westgate and Margate, turning noses and hands red or blue, as the case may be ; but at Deal your very vitals seem to be frozen stiff and stark with the natural acerbity of the air and with the cutthroat blasts that come murderously out of the many alleys of this strange old seafaring town.

At Deal one talks most naturally of the Goodwin Sands. Stretching in a line about eleven miles long, from Broadstairs to Deal, parallel with the coast-line, and roughly from four to five miles from the shore, these dreaded shoals extend at their greatest breadth some four miles. The dangers they offer to the crowded shipping of

the Channel lie chiefly in their being covered at high water.

The Goodwin Sands are the most famous feature of the Kentish coast, though not the most spectacular. If they were, indeed, visible in proportion to their fame or notoriety, they would be as little dangerous as Shakespeare's Cliff itself, which is a landmark for mariners, rather than a peril to them. The Goodwins, more dreaded by seafaring men than rocks, find impressive mention in Shakespeare. In *The Merchant of Venice* they are referred to as "a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried."

The origin of the Goodwin Sands has been from the earliest time a matter of dispute, nor can the question even yet be considered settled. This lack of any definite conclusion is by no means due to want of trying, and the question appears early to have been confused by the inclusion in the inquiry of that very different matter, the accumulation of sand that in the sixteenth century destroyed the haven of Sandwich.

A Royal Commission appears to have been appointed in the reign of Henry the Eighth for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the Goodwin Sands and the sands that were silting up Sandwich haven, and of finding a method of dealing with them. Bishop Latimer narrated in one of his sermons, as an example of unverified gossip, how Sir Thomas More, taking evidence, was met with some curious ideas :

“ Maister More was once sent in commission into Kent ; to help to trie out (if it might be) what was the cause of Goodwin Sandes, and the shelfs that stopped up Sandwich Haven. Thether commeth Maister More, and calleth the countrye afore him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could of likelihode best certify him of that matter, concerning the stopping of Sandwich haven. Among others came in before him an olde man with a white beard, and one that was thought to be a little lesse than a hundredeth yeares olde. When Maister More saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to heare him say his minde in this matter, for, being so olde a man, it was likely that he knew most of any man in that presence and company. So Maister More called this olde aged man unto him, and sayed : ‘ Father,’ sayd he, ‘ tell me, if ye can, what is the cause of this great arising of the sande and shelves here about this haven, and which stop it up that no shippes can arrive here ? Ye are the oldest man that I can espie in all this companye, so that, if any man can tell any cause of it, ye of likelihode can say most in it, or at leastwise more than any other man here assembled.’

“ ‘ Yea, forsooth, good maister,’ quod this olde man, ‘ for I am well nigh an hundredth yeares old, and no man here in this company anything neare unto mine age.’

“ ‘ Well, then,’ quod Maister More, ‘ how say you in this matter ? What thinke ye to be the

cause of these shelves and flattes that stoppe up Sandwicke haven ? ’

“ ‘ Forsooth, syr,’ quoth he, ‘ I am an olde man : I thinke that Tenterton steeple is the cause of Goodwin Sandes. For I am an olde man, syr,’ quod he, ‘ and I may remember the building of Tenterton steeple, and I may remember when there was no steeple at all there. And before that Tenterton steeple was in building, there was no manner of speaking of any flats or sands that stopped the haven ; and therefore I thinke that Tenterton steeple is the cause of the destroying and decaying of Sandwich haven.’ ”

The ancient man whose evidence seemed to Bishop Latimer so absurd a *non sequitur* was not such a fool as he seemed to be, and did but echo the olden widespread belief in Kent that “ the building of Tenterden steeple was the cause of Goodwin Sands.” That belief, when explained, is not so ridiculous as at first sight it appears, even though it be founded upon a legend that has no basis whatever. This legend declares that the Abbot of St. Augustine’s Abbey at Canterbury, to build the steeple of Tenterden church, employed a quantity of stone that had been set aside for repairing the sea-walls defending the Goodwins, then a portion of the mainland ; and that the next storm, in consequence, drowned thousands of acres.

Quite apart from the want of any foundation for this legend, the question was further confused by the old man of Latimer’s story associating

the existing fine and stately Perpendicular tower of Tenterden church with the disaster. The old belief obviously went back to a remote period and referred to some ancient steeple at Tenterden that he never knew.

This folk-tale does not by any means agree with the ancient and widespread legend that the Goodwins form the site of an island called Lomea, said to have been overwhelmed in the great storm of 1099, mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle. John Twyne, or Twine, who in 1590 published a work he called *De Rebus Albionicis*, appears to give the earliest mention of "Lomea." He says it was "a low fertile island," but it is not known whence came his authority for the existence of the isle, or the description of it.

Lomea is said to have been given by Edward the Confessor to Earl Godwin, father of King Harold; but Godwin (from whose name the Goodwin Sands are said to take their title) died in 1053, and no mention is found of Lomea or any such place in charters of that time; nor does it appear in Domesday Book. But it is quite obvious that an island must at some time have existed where the fatal sands now stretch, for most legends contain some nucleus of fact; and it is to be noted that, to the eastward of the North Goodwin, the water is shoaled by a chalk ridge, often said to be the site of that vanished isle.

The marvel-mongering monks of ancient times had their own version of the destruction of Earl Godwin's island. According to them "it sonke

sodainly into the sea," as the punishment ordained by Heaven for his sins. Another absurd story, accounting in a quite different way for the existence of the Sands, declared that they first appeared above water after Holland had been overflowed by the sea ; the greater distribution of water reducing the sea-level.

There is indeed a very wide choice of tradition and legend from which to select the most likely story, and in addition to those already cited there is a tale of how Earl Godwin, in one of his predatory expeditions, penetrating into the weald of Kent and finding himself in a desperately dangerous situation, vowed, if he were permitted to return in safety, that he would build a steeple at Tenterden. Neglecting to fulfil his vow, his island was destroyed by a justly offended Providence. A variant of this declares that, anxious to fulfil his pledge, in doing so he neglected the dams and sea-walls of his domain, which was accordingly overwhelmed in the next great storm.

The Goodwin Sands are of irregular shape, constantly changing in detail, but in general are considered to resemble the form of a lobster, and thus the North and South Callipers stand for the claws. So long ago as 1845 an official report stated that the Brake Sand had moved bodily inwards towards the shore, 700 yards within fifty years. By 1885 the Bunthead Shoal had disappeared and the South Calliper had moved one mile to the north-east ; and in 1896 it was discovered that the Goodwins had continued a

general movement, already noticed, towards the coast, and that the area of drying sand at low tide had largely increased.

For the Goodwin Sands have this peculiarity, among others, that they show above water at the ebb. The North Goodwin indeed is not covered by more than eight or ten feet at high water ; but the South Goodwin is submerged some twenty-four feet. It is no uncommon adventure, although apt to be a risky one, to land upon the sands at low tide ; and cricket-matches have on several occasions been played upon them, although, being more or less yielding, and intersected by pools and runnels, they do not form an ideal site for the purpose. The first match played here was in 1824, when all details of it were arranged by Captain Kennet Martin, who, as harbour-master at Ramsgate, was thoroughly acquainted with the Sands, and was able to bring the occasion to a successful issue. Another match, played in 1839 by a party from Deal, had not concluded when the wind freshened and they found it an ill thing to be on the Goodwins with only a small boat that, useful enough on a calm sea, was of no use at all in half a gale. No oarsmen are strong enough to pull away from the Sands under those circumstances ; and there those adventurous cricketers had to remain, facing death, or the alternative of their danger being recognised by their friends ashore. Fortunately for them, one of the hovelling luggers of Deal was despatched in time.

Two other matches have been played on the Goodwins, one in 1844, and another in 1855; and on August 31st, 1887, a one-mile cycle race was run by three foolhardy cyclists from London. The time taken by the speediest of the three was three minutes, thirty seconds.

Boethius, an old-time writer, described the Goodwin Sands as "a most dreadful gulph and shippe-swallower," and he was well within the mark in doing so, for the dreaded Sands do, in fact, not in any metaphorical sense, often swallow ships up whole. The number of wrecks, too, in spite of the three lightships that mark the Sands, is still very great; according to the Board of Trade Wreck Abstracts from 1859 they average twelve a year, British shipping, exclusive of foreign vessels. The four lifeboats that divide the sands between them—those of Ramsgate, Deal, Walmer, and Kingsdown—have saved upwards of 2,000 lives in peril here.

The greatest disaster that ever happened here was during the terrible fourteen days' storm of November 1703. On November 26th no fewer than thirteen men-o'-war were cast away, and Admiral Beaumont and twelve hundred officers and men were drowned. The story of the wrecks since then would take long in the telling; let us therefore choose only a few of the most outstanding. There was the transport *Aurora*, which sailed straight on to the Goodwins in a fog, and was wrecked with a loss of over three hundred. The wreck of the *British Queen* in 1814 was due to

a like cause. The sole fragment ever found was a portion of the stern, with the ship's name : the hungry sands had swallowed all else, ship and crew !

The mail-packet *Violet*, from Ostend, was lost at two o'clock in the morning of January 5th, 1857. She had started the night before, at eleven. An hour after she had struck upon the Sands there was no one left aboard to answer the signals of the steamer and the lifeboat that set out to the rescue ; at seven there was nothing to be seen of the *Violet*, crew, or passengers but a portion of one mast and the lifebuoy picked up with the lifeboat, in which lay three dead men.

In recent years these insatiable sands have claimed more ships. There was the steamship *Dolphin* in 1885. After being thrown out of her course in a collision with the *Brenda*, she drifted here and became a total loss. Seventeen men were drowned on that occasion, and thirty-three were rescued. On April 20th, 1886, the Norwegian brig *Auguste Hermann Franche*, with a cargo of ice, went ashore on the Goodwins in a fog. Of the crew of seven, only one was saved. On the night of May 14th, 1887, the large schooner *Golden Island* was lost, but all hands were rescued. On April 8th, 1909, the four-masted iron passenger steamer *Mahratta* struck upon the Fawk Spit, and although a number of powerful tugs tried to drag her off, all efforts were useless. The passengers were safely landed, and work was proceeding to jettison some of the cargo, with the

object of lightening the vessel, when she broke in half, with a noise like thunder, and it was not long before the sands swallowed her.

The appearance of the Goodwins when exposed at low water is thoroughly in keeping with the melancholy story of the Sands. The stranger does not find a broad or long uninterrupted stretch of firm sand, but great dismal wastes with here and there a navigable channel between, called by local sea-faring men "swatches," or "swatch-ways"; and in every direction, except after unusually calm weather, the sand is ribbed and hollowed into irregular furrows, water and sand alternating. To remain standing in one place for a short time is to find one's self sinking gradually, and sometimes even suddenly, for these are in many places quicksands; and innocent-looking pools, apparently quite shallow, give the incautious a bad shock by often proving to be perhaps anything from six to sixteen feet deep. They are locally known as "fox-falls," and form but one of the many unpleasant surprises the Goodwins are capable of giving. Another strange thing is the extraordinary steepness of the Sands on the north side of the North Goodwin. The popular idea of a sandbank is of a gradual shoaling of the water, but at this point it falls almost sheer away into deep sea, about ninety feet.

The Sands, even on the brightest day, are the abomination of desolation to the last detail. They are, it is true, "ship-swallowers," but are sometimes nice in their appetite, or over-gorged,



THE GOODWIN SANDS : " A DANGEROUS FLAT AND FATAL. "

and cannot fully dispose of every wreck ; and so the clinching evidence of disaster is rarely lacking, in the protruding timbers of a lost ship, or the fluke of an almost entirely buried anchor ; although it becomes the duty of the Trinity House to remove—generally by blowing up with dynamite—any wreckage here that is considered to be dangerous to navigation.

To stand contemplative upon the Goodwins is a strange and deeply impressive experience. The expanse of doleful grey sand, almost mud-coloured, fully bears out the Shakespearean description of this “ dangerous flat and fatal.” It is so nearly awash and so mixed up with watery gullies that the waves that come curling and snarling upon the edge appear about to overwhelm you. Except for the sound of them, an uncanny stillness prevails, and the great expanse of the sky and the distant white cliffs from near Deal on to Ramsgate intensify the loneliness. A horror of the solitude seizes you, not lessened by the strange tameness of the gulls that numerously patter about and seem to welcome your company.

Attempts have from time to time been made to provide some warning beacon to mark the Goodwins, but it is now recognised that lightships form the only practical solution of the difficulty. It was at about the close of the seventeenth century that the first effort to establish a beacon was made ; but the borings failed to reach any firm basis, and the Sands were declared

to be of unfathomable depth. Even in modern times they have been held by marine surveyors to be of the great depth of some eighty or ninety feet. Sir Charles Lyell, on the other hand, stated them to be only fifteen feet deep, resting on a base of blue clay. The opinion of the seafaring men of the Kentish coast, who are not geologists, or by way of being scientific men, but



THE EAST GOODWIN LIGHTSHIP

who have at any rate a practical acquaintance with the Goodwins in all weathers, is that the depth is indeed very great.

The first lightship to mark the Goodwins was that on the North Sand Head, established in 1795. The Trinity House placed a beacon on them a few years later. It was a primitive affair : merely an old hulk filled with stones, and was perhaps more dangerous than useful to shipping. Several

others were erected, from time to time, all short-lived and ineffectual. The last was the "refuge beacon," erected in 1840. This was the invention of the then Captain (afterwards Admiral) Bullock, and consisted of a tall mast strengthened by stays and provided with a kind of "crow's nest" into which wrecked mariners were supposed to climb. In this refuge were stored supplies of food and restoratives. There do not appear to exist any records of this beacon proving its usefulness in any way; and in 1844 it was destroyed by a vessel running into it. The growing traffic in the Channel has gradually led to the provision of other lightships; the Gull in 1809, the South Sand Head 1832, and the East Goodwin 1874.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DOWNS AND THE DEAL BOATMEN

IT has been shown that the Goodwins have from the earliest times greatly exercised the imaginations of all kinds of people, and that the bones of countless dead have found sepulture there, but it would scarce be supposed that any one would choose to be buried on the Goodwins. Yet there are at least two instances known of such a strange choice ; one of them prominently recorded in the well-known—perhaps better known by repute than actually read—Evelyn's "Diary." John Evelyn, in the pages of that not very light-some record, has an entry dated April 12th, 1705 : " My brother-in-law Granville departed this life this morning, after a long, languishing illness, leaving a son by my sister, and two granddaughters. Our relation and friendship had been long and great. He was a man of excellent partes. He died in the eighty-fourth year of his age, and will'd his body to be wrapp'd in leade and carried downe to Greenwich, put on board a ship, and buried in the sea betweene Dover and Calais, on the Goodwin Sands, which was done on the Tuesday or Wednesday after. This occasioned much

discourse, he having had no relation whatever to the sea."

A similar interment took place forty-six years later, and forms the subject of a paragraph in the *London Evening Post* of May 16th, 1751 :

"We have an account from Hamborg that on the 16th April last, about six leagues off the North Foreland, Captain Wyrck Pietersen, commander of the ship called the *Johannes*, took up a coffin made in the English manner and with the following inscription upon a silver plate : 'Mr. Francis Humphrey Merrydith, died March 25th, 1751, aged 51 ;' which coffin the said captain carried to Hambourg and then opened it, in which was enclosed a leaden one, and the body of an elderly man, embalmed and dressed in fine linen. This is the corpse that was buried in the Goodwin Sands a few weeks ago, according to the will of the deceased."

Much has already been said of the dangers of the Goodwins, but they are not altogether evil. Like human beings, they are compact of good and ill. Their useful and beneficent function is to provide a kind of natural breakwater forming the roadstead famous for centuries in naval and mercantile shipping annals as "the Downs" :

"All in the Downs the fleet lay moored," as the song goes, in Gay's "Black-eyed Susan."

Here, in the comparatively smooth water of this anchorage, stretching from Walmer, past Deal, nearly to Sandwich, the navies of Rodney's and Nelson's times gathered, either for strategical

reasons or in stress of weather. The Downs—whose name comes from *dunes*, referring to the Goodwin Sands and the wild wastes of sand-dunes between Deal and Sandwich—are safe and sheltered in all winds, except a southerly gale ; and thus in old times, when tempests blew from any other quarter, all the shipping in the Channel made haste to ride out the storm in these waters. In those times four hundred vessels were often seen at once sheltering here ; but steamships are less dependent upon the weather, and, now that sailing-vessels are comparatively few, the Downs are never so crowded as of yore.

The days when the Downs were crowded with many a ship that in the fine old descriptive phrase—which really was description and not imagination—“walked the water like a thing of life,” are long since done, and now the vessels that in fewer numbers ride out the worst of the Channel gales here are things of iron that sit deep and wallow in the water like the tanks they really are ; things of steam, with a walking-stick by way of mast and quite innocent of bowsprit. They are vessels in the truest and most exact form of the word, floating tanks, made to hold things, not ships that sit upon the water, as the old sailing-ships did, like swans, or, as the poet says, “walked the water.” There are walks and walks, and I figure the gait of an old frigate, or even of a barque or brigantine, under full canvas, not as a pedestrian’s stride, but as the graceful carriage of a lady in a spacious drawing-room.

The 'longshoremen of all these sixteen miles of roaring storm-bitten coast between the Forelands are men of a courage and endurance proved so long ago that it has become proverbial. Nowhere have those fearless and staunch qualities been displayed to such a degree as at Deal. The "Deal boatmen" are a race famous in the troubled annals of the sea. Between their windy and exposed foreshore, from whose unprotected beach no howling gale has been fierce enough to daunt their putting off, between their shore and the Goodwins they have earned a hard-won livelihood, or have dared the worst of weathers in life-saving, for no reward. There is a nice distinction between the 'longshoremen of Ramsgate and Margate and Dover, and those of Deal; for while all have that "'longshore" appellation, only those of Deal are "boatmen." All own boats, it is true; but the boats of Deal are different from those of the other towns, and only at Deal did the "hoveller" flourish. It is to be feared the day of the hoveller is done, now that steam is superseding sails. There are those who consider that the word "hoveller" is a corruption of "hoverer," and it was the business—and a highly remunerative business too—of these men, in their stout luggers, to put forth in stormy weather and cruise about amid the tempest-tossed waters in search of distressed vessels that might wish to be navigated into port. In these modern times of surveillance and overmuch governing no man may, without a licence from

the Trinity House, or other port authorities, take a piloting job, and pilots form a class of men who are chosen by examination and may only charge according to scale. This is by no means to say that the law against "illicit piloting" is not very frequently set at defiance. It is, in spite of penalties; for, given a ship's captain of a saving disposition and a Deal boatman of pressing needs—and the boatmen of Deal are too often in that category—a bargain is sure to be struck between the two, when they are in hailing distance of one another, somewhere out yonder in the Channel, for something under official rates; and although the offender be not, in fact, licensed and has never gone up for examination, he commonly knows the coast round between Deal and Gravesend, and all its many shoals, swins, and swatchways, as well as the certificated pilots, though it is not in human nature—in official human nature, at any rate—to allow the truth of it.

But there is a vast difference in taking a vessel round the North Foreland into London River, and in snatching her off the very edge of the Goodwins on to which she is blundering in fog or storm. *That* was the hoveller's ostensible business of old, in conjunction with the undeclared addition of smuggling. It was ever the smuggling, with a good deal of rascally cable-slipping and prowling the seas for wreckage, that made hovelling the fine and conscienceless trade it may most fitly be described, and incidentally

made the Deal boatmen the finest sailors in the world. Their present-day representatives are fallen upon the worst of times, and now that days and nights of cruising these waters at their worst yields but an occasional job, the Deal lugger is becoming something of a rarity, and even that other peculiarly localised craft, the "knock-toe," or galley-punt, does not seem to be as numerous on the beach as of yore. The Deal lugger is no longer built. It was a sailing craft, of some fifteen to twenty tons, undecked except for a forepeak. The galley-punt is built to combine the qualities of a rowing-boat and a sailing-vessel, and is thirty feet long, with a beam of five feet, a single mast, stepped amidships, and four oars.

The old story of Deal shows the boatmen of some two hundred years ago to have been as thorough a crew of scoundrels as might have been found along our coasts, except perhaps in the West, where the wreckers of Cornwall were unsurpassed in cold-blooded, calculating ferocity. We do not read of the 'longshoremen of the Kentish coast luring vessels ashore, but we hear a very great deal of their heartless leaving the shipwrecked to perish on the Goodwin Sands and busying themselves in searching for valuable wreckage the while. Defoe, one of the greatest and most industrious journalists who ever lived, whose amazing fecundity staggers research, wrote and published a book called "The Storm" in 1704. It described the great storm of 1703 and

reflected with just severity upon the inhumanity displayed here. "I cannot omit," he says, "that great notice has been taken of the townspeople of Deal, who are blam'd, and I doubt not with too much reason, for their great barbarity in neglecting to save the lives of abundance of poor wretches ; who, having hung upon the masts and rigging of the ships, or floated upon the broken pieces of wrecks, had gotten ashore upon the Goodwin Sands when the tide was out. It was, without doubt, a sad spectacle to behold the poor seamen walking to and fro upon the sands, to view their postures and the signals they made for help, which by the assistance of glasses, was easily seen from the shore. Here they had a few hours' reprieve, but had neither present refreshment nor any hopes of life, for they were sure to be washed into another world at the reflux of the tide. Some boats are said to have come very near them in quest of booty and in search of plunder, and to carry off what they could get, but nobody troubled themselves for the lives of these miserable creatures."

"Those sons of plunder are below my pen,
Because they are below the names of men ;
Who from the shores presenting to their eyes
The fatal Goodwin, where the wreck of navies lies,
A thousand dying sailors talking to the skies,
From the sad shores they saw the wretches walk ;
By signals of distress they talk :
Here with one tide of life they're vex't,
For all were sure to die the next.

The barbarous shores with men and boats abound,
 The men more barbarous than the shores are found.
 Off to the shatter'd ships they go,
 And for the floating purchase row.
 They spare no hazard, or no pain,
 But 'tis to save the goods, and not the men ;
 Within the sinking suppliants' reach appear,
 As if they mock'd their dying fear,
 Then for some trifle all their hopes supplant
 With cruelty would make a Turk relent."

And thus, with indignation, he concludes :

" If I had any satire left to write,
 Could I with suited spleen indite,
 My verse should blast that fatal town,
 And drowned sailors' widows pull it down.
 No footsteps of it should appear,
 And ships no more cast anchor there.
 The barbarous hated name of Deal shou'd die,
 Or be a term of infamy.
 And till that's done, the town will stand
 A just reproach to all the land."

A bright contrast was afforded by the noble conduct of the Mayor of Deal, one Thomas Powell, a slop-seller, who appealed successfully to these callous wretches' hopes of gain by offering five shillings a head for every life saved. He had in the first instance entreated the Customs House officials to put out to save them, but without success, and the boats were refused ; whereupon he and his mercenaries took them by force. More than two hundred of the shipwrecked were thus rescued ; but even when brought ashore

there was no shelter or food to be procured for them by appealing to officials, and the generous Powell was at the costs and charges of feeding, sheltering, and clothing the castaways. Further, he buried those who died, and paid the travelling expenses to Gravesend of the survivors.

Defoe's biting indictment came home to the inhabitants of Deal, and, after a considerable time for thinking it over, they grew angry and resentful about it, in proportion to the truth of the charges. Thus we find them on June 21st, 1705, despatching the following letter :

“ Whereas there has been this day produced to us a book called the ‘ Storm,’ printed in London in the year 1704, for G. Sawbridge, in Little Britain, and sold by J. Nutt, near Stationers’ Hall, pretending to give an account of some particular accidents that happened thereby. We find, amongst other things, several scandalous and false reflections unjustly cast upon the inhabitants of the town and borough of Deal, with the malicious intent to bring a disreputation upon the people thereof, and to create a misunderstanding between her Majesty’s subjects which, if not timely confuted, may produce consequences detrimental to the town, and tend to a breach of the peace. To the end thereof, that the person who caused the publication thereof may be known, in order to be brought to condign punishment for such his infamous libel ; we have thought fit, therefore, to appoint our Town Clerk to proceed against him in a Court of Law, unless he shall

within the space of ten days thereof make known to us the person or persons, and where he or they may be found, who furnished the libellous article in the book commencing page 199 to the end of page 202, to which we expect a truthful answer within the time specified."

There followed upon this hectoring document the signatures of the then Mayor, Jurats, and Corporation of Deal. But it proved to be all sound and empty fury, for nothing came of it.

Such men as these were the ancestors of the Deal boatmen of to-day ; a race now very much down on its luck. The very town of Deal, one may almost say, is a survival. The causes that conjured it up, or at any rate, brought about its growth from a mere village, along the unprotected stark shingle beach, have ceased to operate, and great ships no longer sit for weeks in the Downs, awaiting a breeze, or in any numbers ride out storms in that once providential anchorage, all immensely to the profit of the purveyors of ships' stores and to that of the boatmen. Deal in those times was one vast general shop, in which the mariner might buy anything, from anchors and cables, down to "salthorse" and ships' biscuits. Those days of pigtails, hemp, and sails brought Deal to its time of greatest prosperity, and the present-day appearance of the town still tells the tale of it. Smuggling was then in its prime, and many a lugger constantly made successful runs on dark starless nights, or crept cautiously across Channel when the air

was thick as a blanket with fog, under the very bows of the frigates at anchor in the roadstead.

I do not know that the Deal boatmen of to-day think much of this ancestry of theirs, or set much store by it. They are too much concerned, poor fellows, in considering how they are to get a living in these hard times; times particularly hard for them. But their daring and accomplished launching of a galley-punt and their handling of it in a seaway are exhibitions of craftsmanship impossible to be demonstrated except by these men, who have the hereditary aptitude.

To a landsman, the launching of one of these heavy, lug-sailed, undecked boats off such a beach as this, in a raging surf such as these shores alone can know in time of storm, is a marvel. The breakers are coming in snarling and screaming, in cruel, curving walls of water from whose crests the wind whips off the stinging brine that flies through the hurrying air in particles half in the likeness of sleet and half in that of fog. Here, and at such times, if anywhere, is—

“The scream of a madden’d beach dragged down by the wave”—

so finely phrased by Tennyson, in *Maud*, to be heard.

A launch would seem impossible, but down the beach the galley-punt is run, her keel scrunching through the pebbles with a hurrying roar that rises even above the clamour of wind and

waves, and in a moment she is off, her crew of three leaping or tumbling in like jumping-jacks, and in another moment she is clear of the breakers and heading out to where some steamer is dimly seen rolling and pitching yonder in the obscurity, flying a signal for the landing of the pilot, who has brought her round from the port of London and has now finished his job and is going home by train, as the custom is with pilots.

To such work as this did the Deal boatmen's lives come: hard work, and often hazardous; and, considering the casual nature of it, not well paid. Landing a pilot is, or was, worth twenty-five to thirty shillings or thereabouts, and it is obvious that this sum, casually earned and divided among a crew of three, is a poor recompense. But even this standby has been snatched away from the Deal boatmen since the Trinity House has established a steam pilot-cutter at Dover, which cruises about to land pilots from outward-bound ships at a fixed charge of £1. It is an excellent institution from the pilots' point of view, but it is the last blow to the boatmen of Deal. Steam has ever been their enemy.

Dirty weather is, perhaps, more than ever the opportunity of this hardy and hard-bitten race, of whom it has been said that "every finger is a fish-hook, every hair a rope-yarn, and whose blood is pure Stockholm tar." Mother Carey's chickens—by which I mean, of course, the gulls—are not more at home amid the mountainous waves at such times. They cruise about in

these dangerous seas in search of some captain who has lost his way. It is exquisitely true that other people's misfortunes are their opportunity, and a ship likely without the aid of their expert knowledge of these waters to come to grief on the Goodwins, or other shoals, to say nothing of getting under the unkindly cliffs, is like a choice bone to a hungry dog. I hope I do no injustice to these men in the comparison. It simply discloses the measure of their needs and of their prize. It is a desperate livelihood for these days for them. The winter is hard, the summer season is short, and the fishing and the money earned in taking visitors for a sail form but a scanty and uncertain support for wives and children. Therefore, a ship in difficulties is a godsend that is worth a good deal of cruising for, and worth a good deal of hardship endured and bitter disappointments suffered. But when that ship is picked up there are no more savage and determined men to be found than these. They are embittered by much fruitless quartering of violent seas, and spurred by the thought of weeks of enforced idleness ashore, and by the spectre of empty cupboards at home. A ship-master in peril out there is their legitimate prey, and they bear down upon him out of the driving spindrift as saviours, at a price. These men, who would, and do, man the lifeboats for life-saving with no after-thought for profit, are close dealers in these cases, and if a ship-master declines, for reasons of economy, their help, he may drive on

sands or under cliffs or lose his ship in any way that chance may dictate, and they will not lend a helping hand. And quite rightly, too. Help under such circumstances is well worth the paying for.

"Want any help, sir?" Thus, or in some such way, comes their hail as their craft comes round in the eye of the wind and manœuvres carefully in the swashing seas. It is odds whether the captain, asking perhaps where he is, will be told, or whether he is flatly invited to "find out," in the extremely strong language of these parts. Perhaps he asks "how much to take her into Ramsgate," or whatever port he is making for.

"Twenty pounds"—or ten or fifteen, as the case may be, according to his emergencies.

Bargaining is little use. An offer of half, or more, is pretty sure to be curtly rejected, with "So long, captain; no time to waste."

And then the bargainer almost invariably submits, ungraciously enough with "All right, you —— "pirates," or "beachcombers," or something equally offensive. Strong language is cheap on the seas, and no one resents it, least of all the hovellers and the boatmen who have thus gained their point: it is all the harassed master has left him, and he may put his tongue to what strange curses he will, if it be any satisfaction.

And then, at a carefully chosen moment, as the vessels large and small set to one another in a peculiarly violent kind of maritime dance

and the boatmen's little craft swings dizzily up on a wave alongside, a rope is thrown and one of the galley-punt's crew clambers breathlessly aboard, dashes the brine from his eyes, and is ready to navigate his charge through the seething waters as surely as a cab-driver takes a fare through well-known streets. His companions, sitting like statues in the boat, in streaming yellow oilskins, fade away like ghosts in the turmoil, and make for home.

Such are at those times the men you will see lounging the summer days on Deal beach and suggesting to visitors that it is a "fine day for a sail." It looks a lazy life, this lounging, with hands in pockets, day after day, varied by an occasional turn with the tar-brush or paint-pot upon boat or timbered shanty; but it is really a life of one long waiting for something to turn up, and there is nothing else for it but to lounge hands in pockets. And to do the Deal boatmen the merest justice, they lounge extremely well. Do not mistake me: I do not mean that they do it elegantly. The figure of your typical 'long-shoreman, bargelike and extremely solid, does not permit of that. No, I mean that he absolutely abandons himself to it. There used to be in London, and in society, the Bond Street and the Hyde Park lounge. I believe the exquisite *insouciance* thus indicated is long since extinct. No one lounges now, in these days of motor-cars and general hustle; no one, that is to say, except the 'longshoremen of Deal and elsewhere, but

here at Deal it is perfected. The lounge of Hyde Park—you may see it represented in *Punch*, in many of du Maurier's drawings—was a graceful droop over the railings of the Row; but the lounge had always in the look of him a curious mixture of world-weariness and self-consciousness. He knew he was beautiful, as beautiful as his tailor and toilet-club could make him. Now the 'longshoreman cannot droop, gracefully or otherwise. He is not built that way. There is about him a breadth of beam and an appalling negation of waist that vehemently forbids the very thought of it. He is not beautiful, nor, on the other hand, is he self-conscious. He is of that solid bulk, despite his privations, poor chap, which makes the crazy old capstans on the beach creak and complain, and the tarred shanties shiver when he leans against them. And his costume has been the delight of serious artists and comic for at least a century. His trousers, of some astounding dreadnought material that might almost stand by itself, come a much longer distance up his body than such articles of attire commonly do, and end, according to the caricaturists, under his armpits. According to the same unveracious authorities, they are invariably re-seated, and with materials of an altogether alien colour from the original fabric and generally with some uproarious pattern.

CHAPTER XVIII

WALMER CASTLE—KINGSDOWN—ST. MARGARET'S BAY

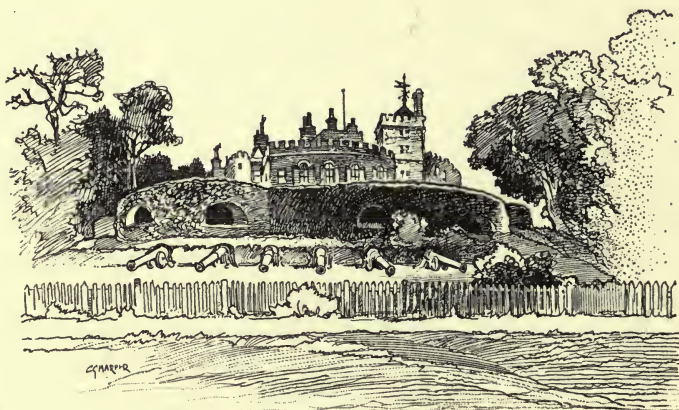
THE low, beachy shore of Deal continues westward through Lower Walmer, the chief part of Walmer lying inland where the road begins to take its rise towards the high rolling downs which fill the miles on to Dover. The beach road runs on for two miles and a half, past Walmer Castle to Kingsdown, where it abruptly ends.

The historic part of Walmer Castle, which is now under the direct control of His Majesty's Office of Works, may be inspected for the modest fee of threepence, at times when the Lord Warden is not in residence. The plainly furnished little bedroom in which the great Duke of Wellington died in 1852, and the room where Pitt and Nelson planned those naval operations which put an end to Napoleon's designs upon this coast, are shown. The approach is imposing, the entrance by a bridge across the deep, dry moat made more picturesque by the early eighteenth-century additions of a bell-cupola and an oriel window above the gateway. Some of the ivy which too thickly covered the fine old stonework has now been re-

moved. It has never been the fate of Walmer Castle to fight the enemy, and its castellans for a hundred years past have been those ornamental officials, the Lords Warden, who have no duties and receive no emoluments. Thus, as a residence, it has received certain accretions which rather lessen its character as a stern, business-like fortress; although, to be sure, the ingenious planning of the interior, with its massive brick passages and unexpected turns, would result in any enemy who succeeded in entering at once losing his way. It is very curious to note, in the construction of this sixteenth-century castle, the survival of mediæval ideas, with a difference. Thus, while ancient Gothic castles had projecting machicolations over the exterior of their gates whence melted lead, boiling oil, and such-like deterrents could be poured upon the enemy, here are great holes overhead, *within* the entrance, for the same purpose; an exquisite refinement upon the original idea, which was merely to check the enemy and persuade him to retire. Here you first caught the enterprising foe, and, having got him within one of the artfully contrived bastions, you simply overwhelmed him at leisure.

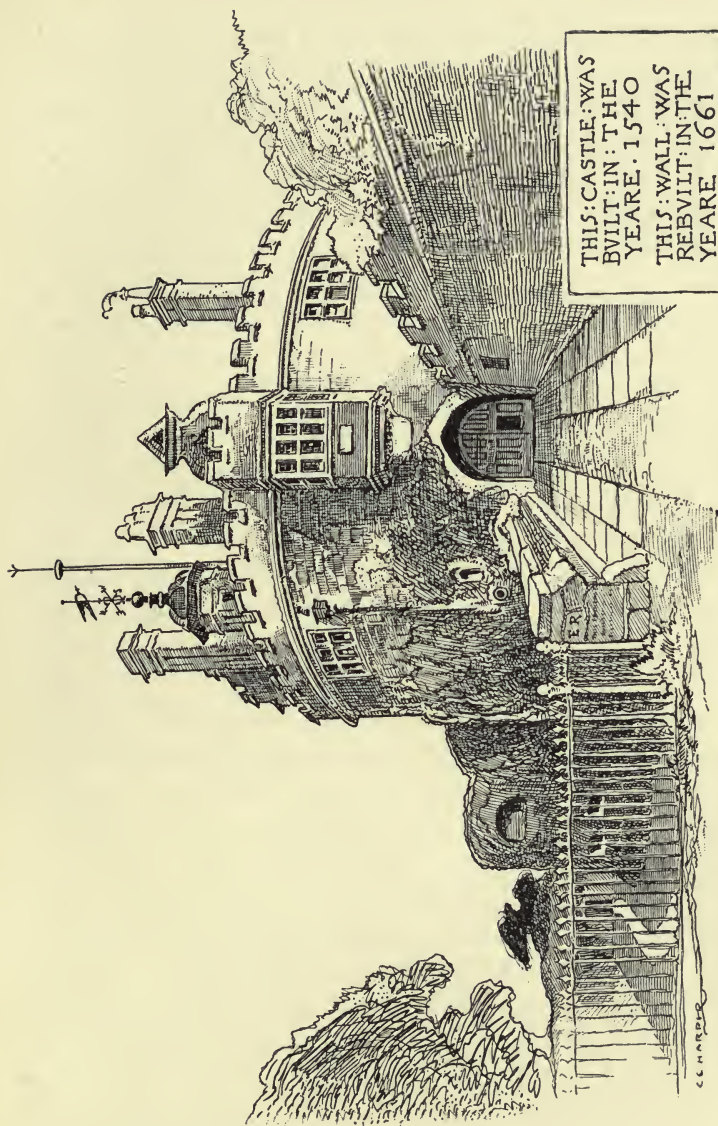
Among the greatest of the Lords Warden was William Pitt, who was here throughout the Napoleonic scare. The beautiful wooded park owes much of its charm to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, who kept house for her bachelor uncle, and in particular planted the fine Portugal laurels which are among its chief ornaments. Pitt's

own avenue of sycamores has grown to great nobility. Cobbett, who could pen the most wonderful descriptions of scenery and the most virulent personal abuse, describes in one of his "Rural Rides" how he came from Dover to Walmer and Deal, and handles Pitt pretty severely on the way. "I got to this place (Deal) about half an hour after the ringing of the eight o'clock bell,



WALMER CASTLE.

or curfew, which I heard at about two miles' distance from the place." This was the curfew, still rung nightly from the Norman church-tower of St. Margaret-at-Cliffe. "From the town of Dover you come up the Castle Hill, and have a most beautiful view from the top of it. You have the sea, the chalk cliffs of Calais, the high land at Boulogne, the town of Dover just under you, the valley towards Folkestone and the much



THIS CASTLE WAS
BUILT IN THE
YEAR 1540
THIS WALL WAS
REBUILT IN THE
YEAR 1661

ENTRANCE TO WALMER CASTLE.

more beautiful valley towards Canterbury ; and, going on a little farther, you have the Downs in full view, with a most beautiful corn country to ride along through. The corn was chiefly cut between Walmer and Dover. The barley almost all cut and tied up in sheaf. Nothing but the beans seemed to remain standing along here. They are not quite so good as the rest of the corn, but they are by no means bad. When I came to the village of Walmer, I inquired for the Castle—that famous place, where Pitt, Dundas, Perceval, and all the whole tribe of plotters against the French Revolution had carried on their plots. After coming through the village of Walmer, you see the entrance to the Castle away to the right. It is situated pretty nearly on the water's edge, and at the bottom of a little dell, about a furlong or so from the turnpike-road. This is now the habitation of our great Minister, Robert Banks Jenkinson, son of Charles of that name. When I was told by a girl who was leasing in a field by the roadside that that was Walmer Castle, I stopped short, pulled my horse round, looked steadfastly at the gateway, and could not help exclaiming, 'O ! thou who inhabitest that famous dwelling ! thou who hast always been in place, let who might be out of place ! O thou everlasting placeman ! thou sage of "over-production," do but cast thine eyes upon this barley-field' "—and so forth.

Onward from Walmer Castle, along the beach to the "Ville and Hamlet of Kingsdown," we

come at length to the end of the coastwise road. Kingsdown is a fishing village on a very wide bank of shingle-beach, with scattered shanties built on it, and old windlasses and a very abandon of quaint seashore properties. It is perhaps possible at low tide to scramble along under the lofty cliffs all the three miles or less to St. Margaret's Bay but it is dangerous, and there is no means of climbing its cliffs. Old people still talk of a road that once ran all the way; but encroachment of the sea has long destroyed it.

It is therefore necessary to climb the exceedingly steep and very pretty leafy lane from Kingsdown to the high road and the grim bare downs. Against the sky, as you proceed, is the tower of Ringwould church, crested with its Dutch-like cupola. Looking backwards you see, peering over the verge of the naked fields, the little bell-turret of Kingsdown church, seeming pitiably insignificant; the church so small, the sea out beyond so immeasurable, and such an aching void.

Passing the beautiful woods of Oxney Court, in a sharp dip of the road, and coming up to the cross roads called "Martin Cross," the village of St. Margaret-at-Cliffe is one mile to the left. It has a particularly fine Norman church with lofty interior and an enriched western doorway. Here the curfew-bell is still rung in the winter months; but this is not the genuine curfew of Norman times; dating only from 1696, when the income from five roods of land was bequeathed

by a shepherd for this purpose. By the chance ringing of this bell he had been saved from walking over the cliff in the dark.

From this windy cliff-top village of St. Margaret-at-Cliffe whose inhabitants appear to live by selling picture-postcards to the stranger and each other, an amazingly steep road zigzags down four hundred feet through the chalk and flint to the beach of St. Margaret's Bay. I envy the explorer his



WALMER CASTLE, FROM THE SEA.

first discovery of this exquisite little spot, that rare, nay, almost phenomenal thing along the crowded, over-exploited coast of Kent—a sequestered and little-known place! Well do I remember my own first discovery of it; the more delightful inasmuch it was unexpected. This is the purest joy of journeying without a guide-book: that you have no certain expectations, and commit yourself in a complete ignorance to absolute chance. Every explorer knows that it



ST. MARGARET'S BAY.

is sometimes the most joyous thing to wend your way uninformed beforehand, without map or description. On the other hand, to fare in this fashion may bring you the most harrowing adventures. Try it both ways, and see what fortune sends you !

Every man should be his own discoverer. It matters nothing to me that numerous others must either intentionally or by chance have come down here into St. Margaret's Bay—seeing that there is an hotel on the beach : an hotel with a singular name, whose meaning, although I have stayed there myself, I by no means fathomed. It is called the “ St. Margaret's Bay and Hotel Lanzarote.”

There is not, I think, so much actually of a bay down here below the towering cliffs of the South Foreland, which rise to a height of 500 feet. If you glance at the map, it will be noticed that the coastline at this spot exhibits the merest setback from the bold front between Deal and Dover ; and a bay (this is a dim memory from school-days) should be something in the nature of a semicircle, large or small, should it not, with enfolding horns, capes, or headlands ? To the ordinary observer, this so-called bay appears to be just about a half-mile length of narrow shingly foreshore along a stretch of coast where the cliffs for the most part descend precipitously to the sea at high water ; and at either end of this unusual selvedge here it is either impossible to proceed further, or else the doing so is a more

or less difficult and dangerous matter. Hence the seclusion of St. Margaret's Bay ; which, however, if plans and schemes of the last few years come to pass, will at no distant date be exchanged, in certain foreshore reclamation works, for a three-miles undercliff drive from Dover. Woe the day !

I do not mean to hint, even remotely, that because St. Margaret's Bay does not figure forth the typical bay of a geographical primer, it is any the worse for it. Not at all ; perhaps, I am willing to allow, it is even the better. At any rate, it is entirely delightful as it is. And what, in détail, is it ? Let it first be premised that no one has ever yet succeeded in conveying the subtle charm of the place. It is easy enough to describe the surroundings ; the South Foreland above, the little beach below, with its modest selvedge of grass ; the cosy, home-like hotel, the little " Green Man " inn, and the scattered twenty or so little houses ; but the spirit of the place is elusive and refuses to be captured and written down and printed.

St. Margaret's Bay claims much : " the air of Margate and the sun of Torquay, the position of Ramsgate and the quiet of Ventnor," and I think all these varied charms may well be conceded. Certainly it is quiet, and surely it is warm, sheltered, and sunny.

Wild-flowers grow in abundance down here, amid what may at first sight seem the sterile chalk : St. John's Wort, feather-grass, convol-

vulus, scarlet poppies, hare-bells, the lovely borage, an exquisite blue, the speedwell, a lighter blue, hawkweed, and many others.

The place is recommended as "a quiet retreat for tired brain-workers," and certainly there is nothing here to disturb or startle. Those who want to be amused—that great desideratum of the brainless and the uncultivated—will not come to St. Margaret's Bay, or, if by any chance they do so, they speedily climb out of it again; that is to say, as speedily as the extravagantly steep road permits; but to those who have resources within themselves this untroubled strand has an enduring charm. I do not think a motor-car has ever been down here, which is so much to the good; plenty of them fuss and stink along the road above.

No parade, or esplanade, or such formality affronts the dignity of the sea here, and although the more or less interesting fact may be gleaned that the London and Paris telephone-cable, completed in March 1891, lands here from Sangatte, on the French coast, one might well go in ignorance of it, so far as any visible evidence goes.

One simply idles here, and reads and rests those tired brains—if one is happy enough to possess any. Almost unconsciously, like Mr. Silas Wegg, the idler drops into poetry:

"Here spreads a little sheltered bay,
Beneath the tall and windy downs,
All undisturbed by nigger lay;
Far from the clustered seaside towns.

“ Here haply by the world forgot
I linger on the pebbly beach,
And seat me where the sun is hot,
And colour like the ripening peach.

“ Here workers come to rest their brains,
O’erwrought in search of fame and pelf—
And so would I, to ease such strains,
Did I possess some brains myself.”

They have a saying down here in St. Margaret’s Bay that “ the Channel is as well lighted as Regent Street,” and it is indeed on some dark evening a striking and a beautiful sight to gaze out across these waters upon the many lights flashing and sparkling out there ; including not only those of the lightships and the lighthouses, but the lights of Ramsgate eleven miles away, twinkling quietly, the riding-lights of vessels at anchor in the Downs, and the brilliant illumination of some great liner surging past.

Beyond the clustered lamps of Ramsgate flashes the occulting North Foreland light ; and out to sea the position of the Goodwin Sands is marked by the Gull Lightship, with its recurrent flash every twenty seconds ; the North Goodwin Lightship, with three flashes in quick succession ; the brilliant South Goodwin, with its double flash every thirty seconds ; the South Sand, visible ten miles ; the East Goodwin, easily distinguished from its fellows by flashing a green light every fifteen seconds ; and the Varne Lightship, far away in the south-west, a crimson

flash. To these add the electric beam of the South Foreland lighthouse overhead, the distant radiance of Dover town; the similar every five seconds' flash of Cape Gris Nez and the more frequent gleam of Calais Harbour, and you have an extraordinary galaxy, not easily to be matched elsewhere.

The South Foreland lighthouse has always been used more or less experimentally. Here



WESTCLIFFE.

magnifying lenses were first installed, in 1810, and here Faraday, in 1853, experimented with the electric light. In 1862 lime-light was tried. It now displays from its height above the sea of 374 feet a powerful electric occulting beam distinguishable at a distance of twenty-six miles. The lower lighthouse, used in conjunction with the upper light before the installation of the present brilliant flash, was discontinued in 1905,

and the building has since been let as a private residence.

Some day in the near future, when St. Margaret's Bay is joined to Dover by the foreshore road at the foot of the cliffs—a road now in the making—it will be a magnificent route of some three miles between those now sundered places. But again, woe the day! At present to climb up out of the bay and up across the foreland, and so along the coastguard path, and past the Convict Prison and by the North Fall Meadow behind the Castle, to Dover is a weariful business. Less weary, perhaps, but longer, and along by-roads, is the way past the tiny secluded village of Westcliffe; and then down the main road, past the Duke of York's School, and still steeply down Dover Castle Hill, into the town, lying there, seething populously in the constricted valley of the Dour.

CHAPTER XIX

DOVER—THE CASTLE AND ROMAN PHAROS—
“QUEEN ELIZABETH’S POCKET-PISTOL”—THE
WESTERN HEIGHTS

THE great and growing town of Dover looks forward to a greater fame than even the historic past has conferred upon it. The measure of Dover’s greatness is not the usual measurement, that of population, for the town numbers only some 44,000. Rather does it lie in its defensible and strategic situation. Dover has ever, from Roman times, been a place of arms, and was, an old chronicler tells us, the “lock and key of the whole kingdom.” That being so, it has always behoved us to make it one of the most strongly fortified places on our coasts. On either side of the deep and narrow valley in which the town lies, the great chalk downs and cliffs rise steeply and massively, and all are in military occupation. The morning drum-beat reverberates from the Western Heights to welcome the rising sun, and the Last Post from the Castle sounds the requiem of the departed day; and in between them the tootling and the fifeing, the words of command, the gun-firing, and all the military alarms and

excursions of a garrison-town help to convince even the most timid that we are being taken care of.

Dover offered more opportunities for the artist in those far-away days when Hollar made his view of it from near the castle heights. At that time the river Dour flowed visibly into the sea, through a valley so sparsely settled that the ancient church of St. Mary, now almost hidden amid the clustered houses of the thronged town, stood out with a cathedral-like prominence. Hollar shows us the ships clustered at the river mouth, but at an earlier time they ascended far up the valley and anchored where the busiest streets are now found. Leland, somewhat earlier than Hollar, speaking of the Dour and the ancient inland haven, says, "The ground which lyeth up betwixt the hilles is yet, in digging, found wosye"—by which he meant "oozy"; and in modern times there have been discovered, in the course of excavations, relics of Roman occupation, when the inhabitants of the Dour Valley crossed the river and the marshes by boats and wooden causeways.

No one who has not viewed Dover from the sea can have a full appreciation of the majesty of its site. But you must not merely glimpse it from the pier-heads or from a boat. Nothing less than the home-coming from continental travel, when the sentiment of "home" gives an added value to the impressive scene, will serve.

The "white cliffs of Albion" have rightly

been the subject of comment and description from the earliest times, for there is nothing in the rest of the whole wide world in the least resembling them. Except for a little of the same chalk formation on the other side of the Channel, at this narrow pass, we in England have a world-monopoly of chalk, and a brave show of bastioned chalky heights the Kentish coast makes. Nowhere else are they so stately as at Dover, for here military art has crowned and set a seal upon the defensible works of nature. But to see those white walls at their best, in whiteness and in rugged grandeur, you must see them from the Channel. Coming across from France, they do indeed gleam milk-white, and the Castle and the Roman pharos beside it seem to be neighbours almost with the clouds. But, examined close at hand, the cliffs of Dover have been plentifully smirched, and I think, from personal observation, that the chalk cliffs of the South Coast are actually at their natural whitest at Seaford, in Sussex.

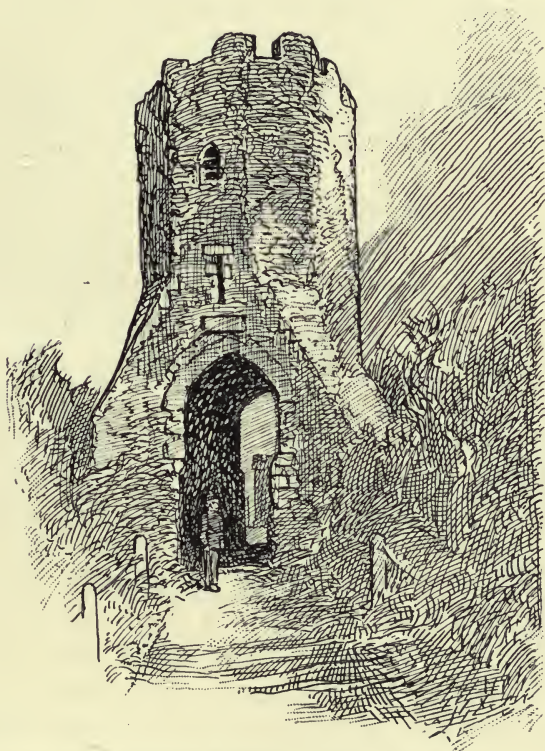
Dover Castle, that "great fortress, reverend and worshipful," sits regally on the lofty cliffs and looks (what it has several times proved not to be) impregnable. It occupies a site of thirty-five acres within its ceinture of curtain-walls, studded at intervals with twenty-six defensible towers, of every size and shape. The chief entrance to the Castle precincts is by the great "Constable's Tower," also variously styled Fiennes, or Newgate Tower, to distinguish it from the Old Tower, formerly the principal



After W. Daniel, R.A.

DOVER CASTLE.

entrance. The others have, for the most part, names sounding as strangely as those of Arthurian romance: Abrancis, or Rokesley Tower; Colton's; Arthur's, or North Gate; Armourer's; Well



COLTON'S TOWER, DOVER CASTLE.

Tower; Harcourt's; Chilham, or Culderscot; Hurst; Arsic, or Sayes Tower; Gatton; Peveril's Gate, also called Beauchamp, or Marshal's Tower; Porth's, Gasting's, or Mary's Tower; Clopton's;

God's-foe ; Crevecœur's, Craville's, or the Earl of Norfolk's Tower ; Fitzwilliam or St. John's ; Avranches, or Maunsel's ; Veville, or Pincester ; Ashfordian Tower ; Mamimot, or Mainmouth Tower ; Palace, or Subterranean Gate ; Suffolk Tower ; and the Arsenal Tower. Besides this imposing array there were, and there remain still, profoundly deep ditches outside the walls. In midst of all these outworks, rising bold and massive as the great keep of the Tower of London itself, is the Palace Tower, or Keep. This is not the actual "castellum Dofris" which Harold, under stress and durance, was made to swear on the bones of the saints that he would yield to William Duke of Normandy, "with the well of water in it," but a later array of buildings ; the Keep being Norman work of about 1153. The actual well is the one now arched over and covered up in the north angle of the Keep.

The last occasion on which Dover Castle was the scene of warlike operations was when it was captured from the Royalists on August 1st, 1642. This successful enterprise was the work of a mere merchant, one Drake, and a dozen men, who at dead of night, by means of ropes and scaling-ladders, climbed the cliffs at an "inaccessible" point ; as such left unguarded. Seizing the sentinel, the gates were thrown open, and the officer on duty, thinking the invading party was a much larger one, surrendered.

The most ancient and venerable object here—it is the oldest building in England, supposed

to have been built A.D. 49—is the Roman pharos, or light-house, one of two that once guided the ships of the Roman emperors into the haven that was situated where the Market-place of Dover now stands. The other, of which only the platform and one fragment of stone have been found,



THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY-IN-THE-CASTLE, WITH THE ROMAN PHAROS, DOVER.

was situated on the western heights. The fellow-tower at Boulogne, the *Gessoriacum* of the Romans, still remains. The rugged, roofless tower of this venerable beacon curiously neighbours the quaint early church of St. Mary-within-the-Castle, itself of great and uncertain age, and both contrast strangely with the modern evidences of case-

mated batteries and the sentry-go of soldiers. Many generations have tinkered and repaired the Roman pharos, whose original tufa blocks and courses of red tiles still defy the elements and the ravages of mischievous hands, while the casing of flint and pebbles set in concrete, added some two centuries ago, long since began to decay. The Roman windows were altered by Gundulf, and the upper story would seem to be the work of Sir Thomas Erpingham, Constable of Dover Castle in the reign of Henry the Fifth, for his sculptured shield of arms appears on it.

The church of St. Mary in 1860 experienced a narrow escape from complete destruction by the War Office, and was only with difficulty rescued by dint of urgent protests from antiquaries. The Department has experienced the like elsewhere, and doubtless wishes all antiquaries at the devil. The building had at that time been reduced to the condition of a coal-bunker, a process begun about a hundred and fifty years before, when it had been ruthlessly cleared out and converted into a storehouse. Among other ejected objects was the monument of the Earl of Northampton, already noticed at Greenwich. The building was opened again in 1862, after restoration.

The twenty-four-foot long brass cannon within the castle grounds, known as "Queen Elizabeth's Pocket-pistol," is by far the best-known and most popular object here. It is not given to every one to appreciate the Roman pharos.

or the Norman architecture of the keep, but this long, slender piece of ordnance makes a direct and easily understood appeal to the sympathies of the crowd, largely on account of the rhyme associated with it, supposed to be a translation of the inscription in Low Dutch that is to be seen on the cannon itself, amid the arabesque devices that decorate its whole length. This familiar jingle runs thus :

“ Load me well and keep me clean,
And I'll carry a ball to Calais Green.”

It could, of course, do nothing of the kind, nor anything like it ; and the inscription says nothing of the sort. Here it is, in its original grotesqueness :

“ Breeck scuret al muer ende wal bin ic geheten,
Deor berch en dal boert minen bal van mi gesmetem.”

The literal translation is :

“ I am bid break all earthworks and walls.
Through hill and dale bores the ball flung by me.”

But it has been well put metrically, without departing to any degree from exactness :

“ O'er hill and dale I throw my ball ;
Breaker, my name, of mound and wall.”

This beautiful work, enriched, together with its wheels, with elaborate ornament, was cast at Utrecht in 1544, and presented by the States-

General of the Netherlands to Queen Elizabeth, defender of the reformed religion.

It is fitting in the completest degree that Dover should have figured in the quarrel that sent the patriot Englishman Earl Godwin, into revolt and exile. The true story of Godwin and his stand for the rights and liberties of Englishmen is well known to history, but it has never been made sufficiently intimate, and the memory of that great man, blackened by lying Norman monks, suffers to this day. The fame of the weak and alien-loving King Edward the Confessor, has, on the other hand, been well cared for, and he has long been regarded as a saint. The trouble arose from a visit in 1051 of Eustace, Count of Boulogne, a brother-in-law of the King, one of the arrogant Normans who even thus early conceived themselves able to insult and ill-treat the people of that Saxon England they were destined to conquer in the succeeding reign. The outrage was deliberate. Halting his party within a mile of Dover, the Count of Boulogne left the saddle of his travelling palfrey, and, putting on his armour and his helmet adorned with the two long whalebone aigrettes that marked his authority along the seashores of Boulogne, he mounted his war-horse, and, with his followers armed in like manner, entered the town. Arrived there, they thrust themselves, uninvited and undesired guests, upon the chief burgesses. Such was the custom in feudal Normandy, but it was unknown in England, and as greatly resented as unknown. One

indignant Englishman promptly thrust out one of these unwelcome guests who had taken veritable "French leave." In return, the stranger drew his sword and wounded his "host," but was promptly set upon and slain. When this incident became known Eustace and his party stormed the house, and the brave defender of the sanctity of his hearth was murdered. An armed foray through the town followed, in which the foreigners fared ill, for nineteen of them were slain by the infuriated townsfolk, and the departure of the remainder across sea was prevented. The King was at Gloucester, and to that city Eustace and those who remained of his retinue hastened, to seek revenge. Edward was enraged, and ordered Godwin to waste the town of Dover with fire and sword. That, you perceive, was the quality of the Confessor's saintliness! Godwin, one of the greatest in the land, himself father-in-law of the King, who had married his daughter Edith, refused to punish without a hearing the men who had merely resented insolence. They should be tried lawfully, and punished only if guilty.

This refusal led directly to Godwin and his son Harold being outlawed, to the raising of rebellion, and eventually to the larger issue, after the death of Edward the Confessor, of the invasion and conquest of England by William of Normandy.

Dover Castle is in most respects, with its pierced and honeycombed cliffs, an up-to-date fortress, but it was realised over a hundred years

ago that the corresponding cliffs on the other side of the town required to be fortified ; and thus the gun-galleries, the barracks, and the many military developments of the " Western Heights " came into being. One reaches these lofty altitudes most conveniently, but up infinite staircases, by that extremely dirty and dismal specimen of engineering skill, " the Shaft," in Snargate Street. Some three hundred (or is it 3,000 ?) steps lead up to those heights, where the Romans had a companion pharos to that on the castle cliffs, and where the Knights Templar founded a twelfth-century church with a round nave, built in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Here are the foundations, all now left, of that church, the smallest of the " round churches " in England, carefully preserved by the Office of Works, and here King John's shameful homage to the Pope was made, " Apud Domum Militiæ Templi juxta Doveriam," May 15th, 1213.

The spot is not, nowadays, of romantic appearance. Modern military barracks are utilitarian rather than beautiful. Sometimes they have even a note of squalor.

Some large fragments of concrete, reared up on end in the Drop Redoubt, form what is called the Bredenstone, or Braidenstone, once sometimes called the " Kissing Stone," for ages an object of traditional veneration ; why, none knew. They combined something of the majesty of the unknown, like that belonging to the Coronation Stone in Westminster Abbey, with a good deal

of the half-humorous importance of the famous Blarney Stone. Really, they were, and are, after all, remaining portions of the vanished Roman pharos buried in the eighteenth century, when the Drop Redoubt was constructed, on the spot called the "Devil's Drop." From time immemorial the Lords Warden of the Cinque Ports had been sworn in upon this Ara Cæsaris, as antiquaries styled it; and after the platform and the "Bredenstone" were exhumed, about 1854, Palmerston was sworn in on the spot, in 1861; and Lord Dufferin in 1891. Lord Salisbury, however, and later holders of the office, were installed in the town, in the grounds of Dover College, on the site of the ancient Priory of St. Martin; but on July 18th, 1914, the old traditional site was resumed, when the new Lord Warden, Earl Beauchamp, was installed on these heights.

In 1823 Cobbett found Dover "like other seaport towns; but really much more clean, and with less blackguard people in it than I ever observed in any seaport before." Things have changed since then, in a woeful way, and with Dover's growth has come squalor and dirt.

He visited the Western Heights, to see with his own eyes, as he tells us, "something of the sorts of means that had been made use of to squander away countless millions of money. Here," he continues, "is a hill containing, probably, a couple of square miles or more, hollowed like a honeycomb. Here are line upon line, trench upon trench, cavern upon cavern, bomb-

proof upon bomb-proof ; in short, the very sight of the thing convinces you that either madness the most humiliating, or profligacy the most scandalous must have been at work here for years. The question that every man of sense asks, is : What reason had you to suppose that the *French would ever come to this hill* to attack it, while the rest of the country was so much more easy to assail ? However, let any man of good, plain understanding, go and look at the works that have here been performed, and that are now all tumbling into ruin. Let him ask what this cavern was for ; what that ditch was for ; what this tank was for ; and why all these horrible holes and hiding-places at an expense of millions upon millions ? Let this scene be brought and placed under the eyes of the people of England, and let them be told that Pitt and Dundas and Perceval had these things done to prevent the country from being conquered ; with voice unanimous the nation would instantly exclaim : Let the French, or let the devil take us, rather than let us resort to means of defence like these.

“ This is, perhaps, the only set of fortifications in the world ever framed for mere *hiding*. There is no appearance of any intention to annoy an enemy. It is a parcel of holes made in a hill, to hide Englishmen from Frenchmen. Just as if the Frenchmen would come to this hill ! Just as if they would not go (if they came at all) and land in Romney Marsh, or on Pevensey Level, or anywhere else, rather than come to this hill ;

rather than come to crawl up Shakespeare's Cliff. All the way along the coast, from this very hill to Portsmouth, or pretty nearly all the way, is a flat. What the devil should they come to this hill for, then? And when you ask this question, they tell you that it is to have an army here *behind* the French, after they had marched into the country! And for a purpose like this; for a purpose so stupid, so senseless, so mad as this, and withal, so scandalously disgraceful, more brick and stone have been buried in this hill than would go to build a neat new cottage for every labouring man in the counties of Kent and Sussex!"

Cobbett here gives way to a fit of senseless vituperation; the more obviously senseless since this rabid tirade comes only two days later than his ride along the coast from New Romney to Hythe and Folkestone, where of course he encountered the martello towers; erected there for the purpose of guarding those levels against a threatened invasion. He raves at them equally as he raves at the works on the Western Heights, and, in short, behaves on the principle of the Irishman who acted on the policy of "when-ever you see a head, hit it." It is very fine fighting form, but it is the very negation of logic.

CHAPTER XX

THE CHANNEL PASSAGE—THE NATIONAL HARBOUR AND ITS STRATEGIC PURPOSE—SWIMMING AND FLYING THE CHANNEL

DOVER has ever been a favourite port with travellers. The advantage of lying near to the opposite coast determined its fortunes from the earliest times, for sea-sickness has naturally always rendered the shortest passage the most popular. Little need, then, it might be thought for proclamations and Acts of Parliament insisting upon this being the port of arrival and departure. Yet we find enactments in the reign of Edward the Third not only regulating "the fares of the passage of Dover" (1330), but in 1335 a law passed that "no pilgrim shall pass out of the Realm, but at Dover." This was supplemented in 1464-5 by an ordinance, "For compelling persons to take passage and land at Dover."

They well knew, those old travellers, the miseries of *mal-de-mer*; the rich and powerful among them no less than the poorer sort, and it was one of these—none other than the great Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent and Chief Justiciar

of Kent, who, about 1208, founded the Maison Dieu, with its establishment of Master, brethren, and sisters, for the lodging, and entertainment of "poor strangers and pilgrims on their way beyond seas." It may be supposed that pilgrims coming as well as going were guests of this charitable establishment. In fact, they did you so well at this place that several shabby-minded monarchs and their retinues, and others who were certainly not poor, did not scruple to quarter themselves here. King John, who was mean enough for anything, set this fashion. A somewhat older place of sojourn for travellers was in St. Martin's Priory, where the Strangers' Hall, of Late Norman architecture, is still to be seen. The manor of Archer's Court, some three miles out of Dover, is associated with the sea, in a quaint tenure, by which the owner held it of the King on condition that "he should hold the King's head when he passes to Calais, and by the working of the sea should be obliged to vomit."

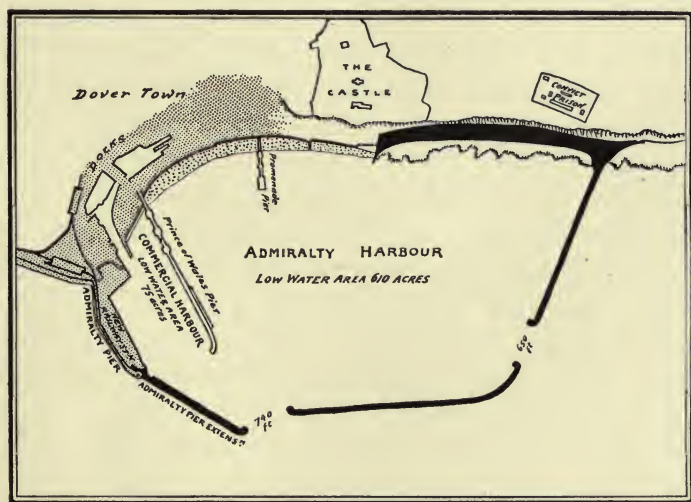
Dover has regained in the last few years all its ancient importance—and more, and has in four or five respects bulked largely in public affairs. The completion of the great National Harbour stands easily foremost; and next in importance comes the story of the proposed Channel Tunnel; followed by the long-drawn search for coal that is still being prosecuted; by the many attempts to swim the Channel; and the several successful flights across it, to and from this point.

The first attempt to make a national harbour at Dover may be traced to the reign of Henry the Eighth, when a long pier formed of timber piles and heavy stones was built out to sea on the site of the modern arm known until recently as the "Admiralty Pier." It cost some £80,000, but seems never to have been quite completed, and was, like the Admiralty Pier itself, until the completion of the great harbour in 1910, merely a breakwater, not a harbour. It broke to some extent the force of the strong set of the currents that sweep towards the east through the narrow Straits, but was washed away at last. The loss of Calais, the last relic of the English possessions in France, during the reign of Mary, led to renewed activities here, for in the words of Raleigh, "no promontory, town, or harbour in Europe is so well situated for annoying the enemy, protecting commerce, or sending and receiving despatches from the Continent"; but the English seamen of that great age dealt roundly with the enemy on the high seas, outside harbours, and, although other works were casually undertaken, the making of Dover a great war-harbour and place of assemblage was not yet.

The great works now happily completed originate in the foresight displayed by the Duke of Wellington, who, convinced of the strategical value of Dover, strongly urged the construction of a harbour here, where the Navy could rendezvous at the threat of war. In 1840, and again in 1844, a Royal Commission sat upon the subject,

took evidence, and issued a report; but the estimated cost of such an undertaking, then placed at two millions sterling, appeared to be too great, and only a portion of it was built. This, the Admiralty Pier, was begun in 1847. It occupied twenty years, and was built largely by convict labour. In its well-remembered original form it extended a distance of 2,000 feet, and was finished off at the seaward end with a fort mounting two big guns, which were but rarely fired, because the concussion generally smashed all the windows along the front.

It was not until 1894 that the old question, then mellowed by half a century, of providing a National Harbour was revived. The Admiralty were urged to consider it anew, in view of the altered



THE NATIONAL HARBOUR, DOVER.

conditions of naval warfare brought about by the gradual perfecting of that new engine of destruction, the torpedo, which had rendered the Downs, that old rendezvous of the fleet, no longer safe from attack. The result of these new deliberations was the letting of a contract in November 1897 to Messrs. Pearson & Sons, by which enormous works, costing considerably over £3,500,000, and taking twelve years to complete, were embarked upon.

To construct a deep-sea harbour at Dover, open at all states of the tide, was an anxious work. Nature has appeared to sternly deny to any of the South Coast towns between Ramsgate and Portsmouth anything of the kind, and such small havens as existed have been mostly silted up. That is the familiar tale of Hythe, of Winchelsea, and of many another. Ramsgate harbour has been kept open only by dint of constant and costly dredging, which has made its harbour-dues almost prohibitively heavy. The natural haven of Dover, in the hollow of the hills, long ages ago became a portion of the town ; and the inset of the coast is so insignificant that it is fighting elemental forces in the open to build strong granite piers and breakwaters in deep water, ranging to a depth of forty feet at low tides, which rise eighteen feet nine inches and through which runs a five-knot current. But the contest is ended, and the eye now ranges from the heights of Shakespeare's Cliff or those of the Castle upon such a harbour as Raleigh never

dreamed. The length of the old Admiralty Pier has been doubled; an eastern arm stretches out from under the Castle to a length of 2,942 feet, and between their seaward extremities stretches, parallel with the shore, a breakwater 4,212 feet long, enclosing, together with the Commercial Harbour, the vast area of 685 acres. The eastern and the western entrances, at either end of the breakwater, are respectively 650 feet and 740 feet wide. The entire Navy can assemble comfortably in Dover Harbour, without fear of torpedo or submarine attacks, and guarded by the frowning forts of the Castle and the Western Heights; while other forts and searchlight stations are placed on the piers and breakwaters. In addition, there are torpedo and submarine stations here for attacking any foe.

The proverbial luck of England is very marked here. When the great harbour was decided upon, the menace of a German Navy and of the remarkable German war preparations at Emden had not arisen. The Germans themselves were still enjoying the fun of calling the German Emperor "gondola Willy," in ridicule of his desire to create a fleet. No one laughs now at the spectacle of a German Navy, which is emphatically "a fleet in being"; and the strategy of the Board of Admiralty is now directed, in consequence of that new factor, rather to guarding the North Sea than the seas patrolled by the old Channel Fleet. Bismarck once rightly described the Baltic Sea as "a hole," in which a German

fleet could be easily shut up. The Baltic Canal was cut by the Germans as a way, and a short way, out of that hole ; but the new British strategic base at Dover, closing the English Channel to the passage either way of a hostile fleet, has, together with other naval bases, constructed, or constructing, along the East Coast and up to the extreme north of Scotland, and in the Orkneys, rendered the North Sea itself something of a "hole," on a larger scale. If we take a map and look at the relative positions of Great Britain and Germany, we shall clearly see that Britain, with the will to do it, can stop the way, and in the event of war close both the Channel and the way round by the North ; thus preventing an attack upon the British possessions over-seas, even though we bear the shock of war along our whole eastern face. But Harwich, Grimsby, and the Tyne ; Rosyth, Dundee, Wick, and Scapa Flow, will in due course be able to stiffen the new front of our position. That the rise of the German Navy has made the North Sea our front is seen in the new dispositions, by which the Channel and the Mediterranean have lost their relative importance, while the North Sea is now the cruising-ground of some thirty of the foremost ships of the Navy.

The last word, the final appeal, is with the land and sea forces of the nation. Orators in Parliament, or stumping the country, may thrill audiences with enthusiasm or indignation, but there is no thrill to equal that which comes of conscious

power. Such a thrill the Englishman may experience here. Let us hope politicians, in their party juggling, may not starve our defences too often, so that they be found wanting in our hour of need.

We have beheaded a King, with some justice, we have shot an Admiral, without justice or sense in the doing of it, and we have from time to time degraded Generals; but, strange to say, we have never yet hanged a statesman, although the occasion has warranted, often enough. It seems a strange immunity! Yet in the coming great struggle, if we be unprepared, it may well be that this immunity will no longer hold. Tennyson, many years ago, contemplating some such national disaster, had a vision of the mob's way with recreant ministers:

“The wild mob's million feet shall kick you from your place.”

It was mildness itself—that is to say, if we take the million kicks figuratively. The proper treatment in such an eventuality would be, not merely to remove those ineffectual persons from their place, but to hang them from the most prominent lamp-posts available; no adequate revenge, but as earnest of popular feeling.

In these later and more striving and hard-working times for the Navy, and in the new strategical dispositions necessitated by modern political developments, the new harbour of Dover is destined to play a prominent part. The old—but still quite recent—days of the Channel Fleet

are done. The English Channel was never an ideal cruising-ground: it has its moods—some of them extremely vicious and surly—but the proximity of the kindly coastwise towns and their snug harbours, and the entertainings and courtesies and general social amenities of a sailor's lot that were generally to be enjoyed ashore savoured life in that fleet with a pleasant flavour. Things are something more Spartan in the North Sea, or—horrid alternative—"German Ocean," and although courtesies are given and received, they do not bulk so largely as in the days when the generous hospitality aboard sent many a guest ashore incoherent but voluble in praise of the way they had with them in the "Flannel Sheet."

The Government works here are by no means the only great undertakings that have been in progress for some years past. The Dover Harbour Board, in conjunction with the South-Eastern and Chatham Railway Companies, has been engaged in providing a great new Commercial Harbour within the shelter of the Admiralty Pier. It was long before those bodies obtained parliamentary sanction for their proposal to widen the pier at its landward end, and to build wharves and a great new station, rather larger than Charing Cross, where for many years past weatherbeaten travellers have been landed in all the discomforts of what was at its best a make-shift arrangement. The railway and steamship companies had for long, by special permission, used the Admiralty Pier as a landing-stage;

but the great increase of traffic, no less than the discontent of passengers put ashore in the open, on a narrow breakwater exposed to the full fury of sea and wind, led them to seek powers for very ambitious new works. The difficulties encountered in dealing with no fewer than seven Government Departments interested: the Treasury, Admiralty, War Office, Board of Trade, Home Office, Post Office, and the Board of Works—give a comic-opera touch to the negotiations; they were at last overcome, and now close upon £2,000,000 has been spent upon the works, a sum provided largely by the income derived from the proceeds of a poll-tax levied on all passengers embarking or landing at Dover. When first introduced, in 1891, it was a shilling a head; but in the way usual with most taxes not strenuously resisted, this proved only the modest beginning of things, and it was raised in 1900 to half a crown.

I have read somewhere a funny story, which really appears to be true as well as funny, of a witness in the local police-court, who, asked his occupation by the Bench, replied that he was a professional man.

“What profession?” inquired the magistrate.

“Well,” said the witness diffidently, “I walk on the pier of an afternoon, and see the boats in!” This sly humorist—if that is his proper description—narrowly escaped committal for contempt of court.

But the Admiralty Pier has ever been the resort of people, resident in Dover, whose chief

interest in life has seemed just this same seeing in the boats ; and now that the Admiralty Pier and the great new harbour-works have provided a much more extended promenade, the " profession " has become correspondingly enlarged.

Dover is an ambitious place, and intends to compete vigorously with Southampton, Plymouth, and Liverpool for overseas traffic. That is all very enterprising, but what it gains as a strategic base, as a place of arms, and as a great commercial port, it will inevitably lose in its capacity as a residential and seaside town. For the rest, it is rapidly becoming a place of monuments. Prominent among these is the bronze portrait-bust of Captain Webb, the first person to swim the Channel. It was unveiled early in 1910, and stands upon a red granite obelisk bearing an inscription recording his famous swim from Dover to Calais, 21 miles in 21 hours 55 minutes, August 24th, 1875.

Many attempts—much advertised and conducted with every aid to success—have since been made to rival Webb's fine performance ; but all proved failures until September 6th, 1911, when Thomas William Burgess, after numerous disappointments, swam from near the South Foreland, Dover, to Le Chatelet, near Calais, in 22 hours 35 minutes : 40 minutes longer than the time taken by Captain Webb. It was his sixteenth attempt. The occasion was made the very most of, in the hysterical manner of the age ; from a congratulatory telegram from the King down

to the excited comments of the halfpenny press. Webb's finer performance of thirty-six years earlier was a comparatively obscure affair. It is a rather saddening instance of the decay of the national character, under the lead of advertisers and half-educated journalists, bent upon sensation-mongering.

The Channel crossing is no longer solely concerned with tunnelling, swimming, or steamboat travelling. The conquest of the air provides a newer way. So long ago as March 22nd, 1882, Colonel Burnaby crossed in a balloon from Dover. Starting at 10 a.m., he landed at Montigny, Normandy, at 2.15 p.m.

Burnaby knew Dover well. An out-of-the-way association with him will be found in the hill-top cemetery, where one epitaph at least has the rare quality of true sympathy. It was placed by him over the grave of his servant, George Radford, and runs: "True as steel. This stone is erected by the man he served so well."

Nowadays, in flying matters—in aviation, as the new word has it—it is the aeroplane, the heavier-than-air machine with the petrol-engine, that attracts attention and performs most of the marvels. Already, at the present time of writing, there have been numerous successful attempts to fly the Channel by aeroplane. It was on Sunday, July 25th, 1909, that the pioneer, M. Blériot, voyaged by monoplane from Calais, landing on Dover cliffs in thirty-seven minutes. A monument, in the shape of a concrete model

of his machine, has been let into the grass of the North Fall Meadow. On May 21st, 1910, the Comte de Lesseps, from the same starting-point, landed near St. Margaret's Bay, in two minutes less. These exploits were followed on June 2nd, 1910, by the Honourable C. S. Rolls, flying from these Dover cliffs to the French coast near Sangatte and back again ; and on August 17th by Mr. J. B. Moisant, an American, of Spanish extraction, who, in the course of an effort to fly from Paris to London, crossed the Channel from Calais with a passenger, and landed at the inland village of Tilmanstone, midway between Sandwich and Dover. With the flight of eleven airmen across the Channel, on July 3rd, 1911, on their way from Calais to London, the brief era in which such things were regarded as marvels may be said to have ended. Already the newspapers have ceased to decorate their accounts of these doings with the startling headlines first accorded them ; and there now appears to be no reason why more astonishment should be exhibited at such sights than at the familiar one of a motor-car careering the road : itself a spectacle thousands of people assembled to see, not so many years ago. Wonderful ! But some things—really, after all, the essential things—are as impossible as ever to combat. Age and pain, poverty, sorrow, and death, remain the lot of mankind, and none may make flight from them.

A fine bronze statue of Charles Stuart Rolls, " the first man to cross the Channel and return

in a single flight," stands on the Parade of Dover, looking seaward. It is a good likeness, in a characteristic pose, of that ill-fated airman, killed little more than a month later at Bournemouth, July 12th, 1910. He is represented standing, in his well-remembered stooping pose, hands behind his back, and gazing with a peculiar intensity out across the sea, towards the misty coast of France; with rather a fateful look, as though with prescience of his end. Something of the sculptor's romantic imagination is in that, for Rolls was essentially of a joyous and forceful nature.

CHAPTER XXI

SHAKESPEARE'S CLIFF—SAMPHIRE—THE CHANNEL
TUNNEL—COAL IN KENT—THE WARREN

“Dost thou know Dover?” asks Gloucester, in the pitiful tragedy of *King Lear*.

Aye; and knowing Dover, we cannot but be well acquainted with that—

“Cliff whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confinèd deep.”

It is Shakespeare's Cliff. “Here's the place,” says Edgar.

“ . . . Stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles : half-way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire—dreadful trade !
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice ; and yon tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock ; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight : the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high,—I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.”



After W. Daniell, R.A.

SHAKESPEARE'S CLIFF.

The height of Shakespeare's Cliff is said to be 365 feet ; but it looks more, owing to the grand outline it presents to the sea. It was once much taller, but for centuries the waves have been nibbling at it. In 1847 some 48,000 tons of chalk fell, and numerous other falls have taken place since.

Not even the ugly tunnel by which the South-Eastern Railway penetrates it can spoil the majesty of Shakespeare's Cliff, whose bastioned steeps present so romantic a profile to the surges. It stands boldly out before you, as you essay the toilsome cliff-walk, by way of Archcliff Fort, to Folkestone.

Samphire, the gathering of which, as Shakespeare truly says, is a "dreadful trade," still grows plentifully here ; and is also found growing amid the shingle by Shoreham Harbour, near Brighton, well above the reach of high water. It has been much esteemed from early times as a pickle. Thus we find, in Gerald's "Herbal," of 1596, "Rock samphire groweth on the rocky cliffs of Dover, Winchelsea, about Southampton, and the Isle of Wight. The leaves, kept in pickle and eaten in salads, with oil and vinegar, is a pleasant sauce for meat."

This curious aromatic plant, with the fleshy, glaucous leaves and yellow flowers, is not uncommon, but at the same time it is very choice and selective in its habitat. Although to be found in the crannies of coastwise cliffs, there are few among the great crowds of holiday-makers

by the sea, other than botanists, who have ever set eyes upon it. Curiously enough, although it looks upon the sea from its favourite spots, it will only grow in situations well out of the reach of salt water.

Samphire is said to be "St. Peter's plant," and to derive its name from "St. Pierre." It is nowadays known in France as "Passe-Pierre," or "Christe marine," and in Italy is called "Herba di San Pietro."

Samphire-picking is carried on in May, when the leaves of the plant are young and succulent. One must needs be young or active, and of a good nerve, to be a samphire-picker, for it is generally only in the more dangerous and inaccessible situations that it is to be found ; and many have in years gone by lost their lives in the "dreadful trade," not in these latter days so greatly followed, although, to be sure, bottles of samphire pickle are to be purchased at Pegwell Bay. The samphire nowadays more generally appeals to the collecting instincts of those devastating persons, the amateur botanists, and enthusiasts in what is known, in the latest fashion, as "Nature Study," who are stripping the country of all its ferns and desirable wild plants ; and many must be the narrow escapes every year of those who climb cliffs in search of it.

The "samphire pickle" sometimes to be bought is not always what it pretends to be, for here, as so often elsewhere, adulteration's artful aid is called in, and the more plentiful and much

more easily gathered glass-wort, which grows on mud-flats, and greatly resembles samphire, without its aromatic qualities, is bottled with vinegar, to the deception of a trustful public.

The cliffs along the way to Folkestone are of quite extraordinary interest, so numerous are the schemes and exploitations they display. Here, looking over the edge, you see, on a scrap of foreshore where the railway emerges from the tunnel, a siding with works of sorts and a smoking chimney. This is the site, not only of the Channel Tunnel works, but also of the Shakespeare Cliff Colliery.

The idea of a Channel Tunnel, under consideration so long ago as 1867, was originally received with great favour in both France and England, and an agreement upon the subject was arrived at in 1876, by which it was to be begun simultaneously from either side.

It was, however, regarded as a commercial project and in no sense as a Government undertaking, the respective Governments merely adopting a benevolent attitude toward the scheme. Some years passed before the Channel Tunnel Companies on either side commenced operations from Dover and Sangatte. It was due to the energy of that arch-contriver, Sir Edward Watkin, that the scheme at last took definite shape and was translated into action. As chairman of what was then the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (now the Great Central) and of the South-Eastern Railway, he was gene-

rally credited with a bold plan for creating a through trunk line from Manchester to London and Dover, and thence beneath the Channel and so on to France, without change of carriage. Like many another Moses, he saw his Promised Land, but could not enter upon it. He brought the old M. S. and L. to London and lived to see it the "Great Central," but his Channel Tunnel, begun so bravely, was stopped by a nervous Government in 1886, when it had progressed 5,500 feet. A like distance had been tunnelled from the French coast.

It was an alarmist article in the *Nineteenth Century* that spoiled his pet scheme, and although Watkin on several occasions went to the great trouble and expense—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, saddled the South-Eastern Railway shareholders with a great expense—of inviting parties of statesmen and influential personages to inspect the works and to partake of costly luncheons on this spot, he never gained any return for his outlay on chicken and champagne.

The plans for the Tunnel had originally provided for starting actually from the Dover side of Shakespeare's Cliff, instead of from the present obscure situation; but the War Office insisted upon the change, although it is the simplest proposition in strategy that the mouth of the Tunnel, placed where at first intended, would have been easily controlled by the Dover forts. The selected spot, supposing the work ever to be completed, is far

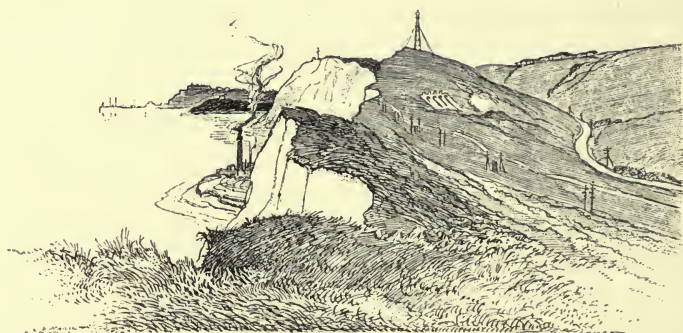
more capable of being used by an enemy, being relatively away from observation and masked from gun-fire by the intervening shoulders of the hills.

The plan for tunnelling the twenty-three miles was for parallel tunnels, each carrying a single line. The original estimate was £10,000,000, but the work, as it progressed through the chalk, proved so easy that these figures were reduced to £4,000,000, largely because it was found that the chalk was watertight and required no casing. The abandoned works remain quite dry to this day. The scare, shared though it was by Lord Wolseley and other eminent authorities, does not seem very creditable, and there can be little doubt but that, sooner or later, the Government bar upon the progress of the work will be removed, and the Tunnel become an accomplished fact. Meanwhile the Channel Tunnel Company continues to hold its annual meetings, and new Parliamentary Bills are duly promoted. "Public sentiment has been aroused against the Tunnel," remarked the chairman recently, "and it must abide its time and opportunity."

From railway tunnelling to coal-mining the transition, for the scheming brain of Sir Edward Watkin, was easy. An idea had long been current that coal existed under the Kentish chalk. Geologists considered that the French and Belgian coalfields naturally continued under the Channel, and that borings would disclose coal-measures, probably at considerable depths. Many borings

were made at various places, among others at a spot north of Battle, in Sussex, in 1872, where a depth of 1,905 feet was reached, without result.

The selection of Dover as a likely place was due to the stopping of the Channel Tunnel works by the Government, in 1886, when the tunnelling machinery was thrown idle and the employment of it in shaft-sinking for coal on the same site was suggested. Coal-seeking was thereupon begun,



SHAKESPEARE CLIFF COLLIERY, AND THE COAST TOWARDS FOLKESTONE.

in spite of the already long-expressed opinion of Sir Roderick Murchison, one of our most eminent geologists, that the existence of any *productive* coalfields in the south-eastern counties was in the highest degree improbable. The results of some thirty years' boring and shaft-sinking at Dover seem to amply justify his view, for since March 1905, when a number of journalists were invited to inspect the works of the Consolidated Kent Collieries Corporation, little has been heard

of coal at the Shakespeare Cliff shafts. On that memorable occasion the chairman of the company pointed triumphantly to a small stack of what undoubtedly was coal, and the journalists gazed, awe-stricken, upon the sight. It was not coal that would commend itself to a householder, for kitchen, or indeed any other use, being soft and easily to be crumbled between thumb and finger. The heap weighed about twelve tons, and was the sole result, to that date, from one and a half millions sterling subscribed by the public to the successive companies seeking coal here. It had thus cost £125,000 per ton; and, being so rare and costly, the chairman was very properly indignant when it was proposed to burn some. Since then, notably in 1912, other coal has been raised here and has been triumphantly exhibited in Dover shop-windows; but, up to the present, a very great deal more of that mineral has been expended upon working the machinery of the shafts than has been brought up from them.

There is a vast deal of exhausting up-and-down walking along the lofty cliff tops on the way from the Shakespeare Cliff Colliery to Folkestone. The Dover to Folkestone road itself, running somewhat inland, at first in the lap of these downs, climbs continually for more than five miles, and is a profoundly wearisome highway. It is an effect of vastness which obsesses the traveller here, and, where the road leaves the sheltered, tree-clad hollow, one of stark and uncomfortable surroundings; horribly bleak in winter, and hot enough

to fry you in summer. But at a point a mile and a half along the cliffs' edge, where they rise to a great height beside a coastguard-station, the explorer on foot may, at the cost of another considerable output of exertion, descend to the beach in a very fine, romantic, and absolutely secluded nook. Rarely will you find any one down here : the spot is too little known, and the effort of descending and climbing up again is too great. No fewer than 530 steps lead, roughly, and with many zigzags, down the face of the cliffs to the beach. The spot is known as Lydden Spout, from a clear spring which used to gush from the chalk, and, later, was made to issue from an iron pipe. It spouts no longer ; but this is still a place worth all the trouble of getting at. Gulls down here, screaming and chorusing like so many party politicians (but much more sincere), take little notice of the rare stranger. If you like, you can walk back along the beach, all the way to the Colliery. Which is the more exhausting, the shingle walk, or remounting those more than 500 steps, I will not pretend to say.

The pedestrian's way into Folkestone lies along the Warren, that ancient, tumbled expanse of wild undercliff, two miles long, which you see spread out before you on reaching the "Royal Oak" inn, by the roadside. Resisting the hospitalities of the tankards held out by the beery votaries of the wayside public, let us descend through the Warren into the town. On the way down we shall pass by the gorsy hollow called

"Steddy Hole," a spot of horrific interest a good many years ago, for here, in the Crimean War period, August 1856, a soldier of the Foreign Legion, one Dedea Redanes, a Neapolitan, murdered "sweet Maria and lovely Caroline," as a stone formerly to be seen here described them: two sisters, Caroline and Maria Buck. He was duly executed at Maidstone. The stone is no longer to be seen, and the tragic hollow to such a degree been forgotten that on summer days happy lovers may be found in the ill-omened spot, unconscious of its tragedy.

There is a large area of Warren, appearing the larger by reason of its tumbled nature. The South-Eastern Railway runs through its midst, and the two most easterly of the old martello towers on the Kentish coast stand on guard, aloof, grim, grey, and solitary, with all Folkestone for a background. The Warren is full of wild life, and is thus the very antithesis of Folkestone's stuccoesque conventions. I believe, on the authority of the late Rev. J. G. Wood, that the "rare earwig, *Labidura riparia*," is to be found here. The information came to him by way of a courageous lady who, wandering over these hummocky hollows, discovered the fearsome thing roaming about in happy ignorance of its Latin name or its exceeding rarity, and, with a courage beyond her sex in dealing with creeping objects, captured it and sent it to that eminent naturalist.

CHAPTER XXII

FOLKESTONE—THE OLD TOWN AND THE NEW—
DICKENS AND “PAVILIONSTONE”—SANDGATE

WE come into Folkestone by way of the mean streets that immediately fringe the Old Town, that survival of the fisher-village which existed many centuries before ever the modern pleasure-resort was thought of.

No one has with any certainty penetrated the mystery of Folkestone's name. As the *Lapis Populi* of the Romans, the “Folcanstane” of the Saxons, and the “Fulchestane” of Domesday Book, it remains a puzzle. No one knows who these “folk” were, nor what was their “stone.” The situation of the town is really, when you come to consider it, of the most extraordinary kind; but no one who has not approached it either way along the coast, or from inland, can quite sum up this situation, for the growth of modern Folkestone is so great that, when in it, the natural features of the spot are obscured by many houses. Perhaps the best point of view whence to sum up Folkestone is at the rear, along the road from Canterbury. Up there, on the lofty downs, those bold, grassy chalk-hills, you look

down across a mile or so of apparently level land, at whose seaward extremity the clustered houses of the town are massed against the sea. But, coming down into those levels, it is seen that the Old Town lies in a hollow on the shore, while fashionable Folkestone occupies a lofty cliff-top; the famous "Leas," intermediate between them being the business districts, including Tontine Street and Rendezvous Street.

Not all Old Folkestone survives, nor is even that which remains exactly as it was. The old open stream which dashed down into the harbour has been piped; because, they say, its odour became too strong. That is as may be; but the remark is permissible that the super-smells of Folkestone Harbour at low-water outclass anything possible in streams. Still, enough remains of Old Folkestone to show the inquisitive stranger what the old-time fishermen's and smugglers' haunts were like. No one is in the least inquisitive about the new town, because it displays itself most prominently to the view, hiding nothing. Thus viewed, it is seen to be chiefly in that manner of building which prevailed in South Kensington's early days, before that region became a byword for culture. It is in the greyest of grey stucco, and exceedingly dismal.

But down by the Harbour, where Old Folkestone sits and partly squatters in the water and for the rest climbs up and slides down amazing acclivities and declivities, a great deal of interest survives; with shy corners and alleys that seem

to shun observation. Ingoldsby's description of the Folkestone of his day, early in the nineteenth century, still in part holds good. To him it was "a collection of houses which its maligners call a fishing-town, and its well-wishers a watering-place. A limb of the Cinque Ports, it has (or lately had) a corporation of its own and has been thought considerable enough to give a second title to a noble family. Rome stood on seven hills—Folkestone seems to have been built upon



THE STADE, AND OLD TACKLE-BOXES, FOLKESTONE.

seventy. Its streets, lanes, and alleys—fanciful distinctions without much real difference—are

agreeable enough to persons who do not mind running up and down stairs ; and the only inconvenience at all felt by such of its inhabitants as are not asthmatic is when some heedless urchin tumbles down a chimney or an impertinent pedestrian peeps into a garret window."

These remarks about precipitous streets may well be supplemented by the description given by Dickens, who, visiting Folkestone in 1855, wrote to Wilkie Collins and spoke of "a steep, crooked street, like a crippled ladder," a comparison which well fits the High Street to this day.

The chief picturesque asset of this region is the exceedingly quaint group of old tarred tackle-boxes, or rigging-lofts, fronting the Fish Market, on the Stade. This is the last stronghold of the picturesque here, and very well worth preserving. Elsewhere in the Old Town there are interesting seventeenth and eighteenth century red-brick houses, but they are woefully slummy. High above this lowly region and the harbour is the old parish church of St. Eanswythe, that famous lady, daughter of Eadbald, King of Kent, who founded a convent here on the hilltop and caused water to run miraculously uphill to supply it. It is not surprising that she was made a saint. Rome could scarcely do less. A leaden reliquary containing relics of her was discovered in a wall of the church in 1895.

I have already remarked that modern Folkestone, as distinguished from the old fishing-port, wears in its most prominent residential parts the

appearance of an unregenerate South Kensington ; of the South Kensington before the cult of the sunflower and of Queen Annean architecture banished white brick and stucco. That it should so closely resemble the South Kensington of the Cromwell Road district, built soon after the Great Exhibition of 1851, is not remarkable, seeing that it was Cubitt, that great conjurer with bricks and mortar (not forgetting the plaster) who was the author of both. He bade arise both Cromwell Road and the intensely respectable and extremely expensive mansions that front upon the Folkestone Leas—or Lees, as I grieve to find them frequently spelt—and Dickens was in 1855, or thereabouts, the prophet of all these things. Dickens, in this setting, is a figure of absolute rightness. You cannot imagine him, even had he lived long enough, in a Morris and Burne-Jones *milieu*.

He came to Folkestone when the new town was of the newest and still in the making, and when the original Pavilion Hotel, the predecessor of the existing hotel of that name, was fresh-built. He described Folkestone under the name of “Pavilionstone,” and one may still see in Albion Villas the house he rented for a time ; a thoroughly typical house.

“I am myself,” he wrote, “of New Pavilionstone. We are a little mortary and limey at present, but we are getting on capitally. Indeed, we were getting on so fast, at one time, that we overdid it, and built a street of shops, the business of which may be expected to arrive in about ten

years. We are sensibly laid out in general ; and with a little care and pains (by no means wanting, so far), shall become a very pretty place. We ought to be, for our situation is delightful, our air is delicious, and our breezy hills and downs, carpeted with wild thyme, and decorated with millions of wild-flowers, are, on the faith of a pedestrian, perfect. In New Pavilionstone we are a little too much addicted to small windows, with more bricks in them than glass, and we are not over-fanciful in the way of decorative architecture, and we get unexpected sea-views through cracks in the street doors ; on the whole, however, we are very snug and comfortable, and well accommodated.”

Dickens had, however, not the remotest conception of what the place he was pleased to style “ Pavilionstone ” would become. He saw only the beginnings of the lordly and exclusive pleasure-resort on the lofty cliff-tops, one hundred and twenty feet above the sea ; and the people who made holiday at Folkestone in his time were frankly people who “ went to the seaside ” and descended to the beach, and sometimes even paddled in the sea, and did the like undignified things. Now the Folkestone that in these times centres upon the Leas does nothing of this sort. It notices sometimes that the sea does, in fact, incidentally stretch away out and down there, and it knows—ah, yes—that there is a harbour. Sometimes you start from it for the Continent, don't you know ! But from the austere and

exclusive Leas the tripper element is entirely banished, and those sedate and dignified fashionable visitors who promenade beside the lawns between the old church of St. Eanswythe at the eastern extremity and the huge Hotel Metropole and the Grand at the western end seem to take their pleasure as solemnly as though it were one everlasting Church Parade. There are people, it is true, of a lower social status, and of a more primitive and joyous nature, who come to Folkestone, and patronise the very fine pleasure pier, and do not disdain the beach and the simple old delights of the seashore; and there are still other people who patronise a "switchback" contrivance down below; but these are folk who stay somewhere in back streets, who have no sort of commerce with the refined life which distinguishes the Leas. Sometimes, it is true, some of the Olympians of these heights descend by the lifts that communicate directly with that geographical and social underworld, and occasionally the primitive people of down yonder ascend by the same means from the Lower Road to explore this rarefied region, and both are impressed by what they see and hear. But they mingle no more than oil and water will do. The very bands understand to a nicety the differences of ideals and outlook, and render Grieg, Wagner, and classical music above, while to the Lower Road audiences they discourse strains of a simpler and more popular kind.

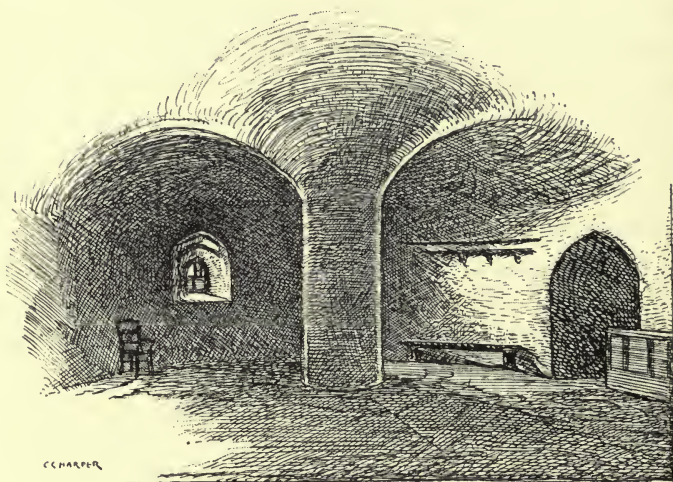
It is distinctly strange to observe in midst of

the drab, smug, commonplace setting of the Leas the statue of an early seventeenth-century celebrity. It stands at the opening of Castle Hill Avenue, and looks painfully out of place. The effigy represents William Harvey, Folkestone's one and only celebrity, holding a heart. He was born here in 1578, and for the rest of of his life had little connection with Folkestone. It is quite certain that Folkestone's visitors are incurious about him, and that, while some can identify him as the great physician who discovered the circulation of the blood (which they consider to be a perfectly obvious thing, anyway), others have a dim notion that he was the originator of Harvey's Worcester Sauce. It is high time that this statue received a thorough cleansing from the oxide which the salt sea-breezes have deposited on its bronze, covering the distinguished man with green, leprous-looking blotches.

The extreme Western end of Folkestone touches a more pleasing note than the rest. There neutral tints and unimaginative Middle Victorian ideals give place to red-brick and terra-cotta houses of tasteful design, and thus point the moral that most of Folkestone was built too early.

From this point the cliffs die suddenly down to Sandgate, and from the edge you get wonderful views away across Romney Marsh to Dungeness, whose light is at nightfall a prominent object from the Leas. Sandgate, as its name duly suggests to the reflective mind, is situated on a level shore, and is a mile-long street of mingled shops

and residences. A martello tower looks down upon Sandgate from the Leas, and down upon the seashore stands an older defence, Sandgate Castle, a coastwise fortress built by Henry the Eighth for the defence of these low-lying shores against the foreign foe. We know more about the building of Sandgate Castle than about any of



INTERIOR, SANDGATE CASTLE.

its fellow fortresses, for the "Ledger" containing the building-accounts is preserved in the British Museum. By those pages it appears that it was completed in 1540, and cost £5,584 7s. 2d. The time occupied in the work was eighteen months, an astonishingly short space when the massive character of it is seen. The ground-plan is similar to that of Walmer, but much of the

building has disappeared ; still, what is left of it is massive and forbidding, and although the sea thunders upon the beach and washes its walls, it will be long before the fury of the waves brings them to complete ruin. Although the exterior of the keep is faced with masonry, the substantial core is brick, eight feet in thickness. The central chamber is vaulted in brick, in a plain barrel-vault, from the centre, the roof thus formed having been intended for use as a gun-platform. The vast number of 147,000 bricks went to the building—a work of great technical excellence. The stone came largely from the religious houses of St. Radigund's, near Dover ; Christ Church, Canterbury ; and Horton Priory.

Finally, after a long, untroubled history, without ever having encountered an enemy, Sandgate Castle was abandoned. It became at last the property of the South-Eastern Railway, and was then sold into private ownership. To-day it contains a most interesting museum, and may be inspected for the extremely modest fee of one penny.

Sandgate, some years ago, considered itself to be the victim of an earthquake, and the London papers one morning were full of terrifying accounts of the dangers awaiting this part of the south coast. But it was, after all, nothing more than a landslip ; and no volcanoes nor craters, nor any other evidences of subterranean disturbance, have since fluttered the dovescotes of Sandgate, Folkestone, or Hythe. The landslip happened

on March 4th, 1893, or at any rate culminated on that day ; but for some days earlier cracks had been noticed in walls, and after the great subsidences of the 4th some further days passed before the soil resettled itself. Landsprings in the sandy heights at the back of the town were the cause of the trouble.

Although the terror caused by the affair was afterwards seen to have been greater than the happening warranted, still the damage caused was very considerable, and scarcely a house in Sandgate escaped some damage, while some were utterly wrecked. The damage was estimated at £5,000.

Sandgate has greatly changed since then, and has been almost entirely rebuilt.

CHAPTER XXIII

SHORNCLIFFE CAMP—THE ROYAL MILITARY CANAL
—HYTHE—ROMNEY MARSH—THE MARTELLO
TOWERS—THE “ HOLY MAID OF KENT ”

FROM Sandgate the seashore goes level for many miles, through Seabrook and Hythe, and across Romney Marsh to Dungeness. Not until Sussex is reached and Winchelsea passed do the cliffs again rise, confronting the sea.

Hard by Sandgate Castle stands the centenary monument on the modest parade to Sir John Moore, the hero of Coruña, unveiled November 19th, 1909. The spot is appropriate because, at the back of Sandgate, up away out of sight, is Shorncliffe Camp, closely associated with that distinguished soldier. The military works in these parts, along a coast so peculiarly exposed to foreign invasion, are many and important. Henry the Eighth, as we have seen, was diligent in fortifying these low-lying shores, and there came a time, two hundred and sixty-five years later, when the Government of that day was equally concerned about a possible French attack. Then, in 1805, was constructed the famous “ Royal Military Canal,” which extends a distance of

about twenty miles from Rye to Hythe, with its sluices here at Seabrook, adjoining Sandgate railway-station. The canal is thirty feet wide and nine feet deep in the middle. Its function was, in connection with a regular line of martello-towers on the beach, to hamper and impede a landing-force.

“Mr. Pitt’s Military Canal,” as it was in those days styled, formed the target for many shafts of ridicule. “The French,” said Ingoldsby, “managed indeed to scramble over the Rhine and the Rhone, and other insignificant currents, but they never did, or could, pass Mr. Pitt’s ‘Military Canal.’ ”

Here, where the Canal’s sluices pour their waters into the sea, are remains of military works, intended to defend this vital spot, with Shorncliffe Camp above. The world wags still with an amiable slowness here, the old horse-tramway through Sandgate to Hythe, belonging to the South-Eastern Railway, leaving the main road and progressing along the beach. The only trouble is the constant succession of motor-cars, generally racing at illegal speeds along these flat roads and producing clouds of dust.

Seabrook melts insensibly into Hythe, that quaint old place whose name, signifying “the harbour,” proves how changed are the local conditions from those remote times when the little town first arose. Then ships came up to it. To-day the sea is distant across a mile-long waste of shingle, and, of all the four parishes in

it, but one now remains ; with but one church. This, the noble Early English church of St. Leonard, is of much architectural interest ; but it is sadly to be supposed that the average holiday-maker is more attracted by the gruesome collection of ancient skulls, exhibited in the crypt, or undercroft. You may see these poor relics,



HYTHE.

if you have a mind to it, for the fee of threepence, and the curiously morbid taste widely distributed among sightseers brings in a plentiful harvest of pennies and threepenny-bits, all through the summer. The collection at present consists of some six hundred skulls and a neatly arranged stack of bones that once formed the framework of about seven thousand men. They are sup-

posed to be the remains of men of some distant age who fell in battle by the sea-shore ; and, whether they died in the hour of victory or of defeat, we may perhaps assume, now that their bones, so many centuries later, bring a modest income to the church of Hythe, that they did not die in vain. But whether they would have chosen to be a show for the curious and the vulgar is another matter. For myself, I think it a scandal and an indignity, and consider that the clergy of Hythe, past and present, deserve the greatest censure for holding and continuing the exhibition.

Were it not that scientific men, examining the skulls, have declared them all to be those of men, we might most fittingly assume that this undercroft was merely a charnel-house, like those seen in Brittany, to which the bones of the older occupants of the churchyard are from time to time removed ; but since the remains *are* only those of men, and as many of the skulls exhibit gashes, the vague ancient legends of some great battle appear to be not without foundation. But at what period that great fight was fought, and between what opposing races, is uncertain. Hasted, in his "History of Kent," tells us that the battle was fought A.D. 456, between the Britons and the Saxons, and that the Saxons were utterly defeated: "Vortimer still followed the retreating Saxons, and, coming up with them again on the seashore near Folkestone in the year 456, fought a third battle with them between that place

and Hythe, gaining a complete victory. Nennius and others say it was fought in a field on the shores of the Gallic Sea, where stood the Lapis Populi."

Another historian places the date of the battle three hundred and eighty-seven years later. "A.D. 843," he says, "in the reign of Ethelwolf, the Danes landed on the coast of Kent, near to the town of Hyta, and proceeded as far as Canterbury, great part of which they burnt. At length Gustavus (then Governor of Kent) raised a considerable force, with which he opposed their progress; and, after an engagement in which the Danes were defeated, pursued them to their shipping on the sea-coast, where they made a most obstinate resistance. The Britons, however, were victorious, but the slaughter was prodigious, there being not less than thirty thousand left dead. After the battle the Britons, wearied with fatigue, returned to their homes, leaving the slain on the field of battle, where, being exposed to the different changes of the weather, the flesh rotted from the bones, which were afterwards collected and piled in heaps by the inhabitants, who in time removed them into a vault in one of the churches of Hyta, now called Hythe."

Hythe owes a great deal to the memory of William Pitt, whose Military Canal has, in the more than a hundred years since it was made, become one of the loveliest of waterways, on which splendid boating, under the shade of century-old trees, may be had. Leaving the town, the road comes at once, past the bridge over the Canal and

by the "Duke's Head" inn, into the romantic region of Romney Marsh.

Romney Marsh was in merry Tom Ingoldsby's time so out of the way that he could find it possible to say, with that humorous exaggeration which enshrines some little truth, "the world, according to the best geographers, is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Romney Marsh. In this last-named, and fifth, quarter of the globe a witch may still be occasionally discovered in favourable, *i.e.* stormy seasons, weathering Dungeness Point in an eggshell, or careering on her broomstick over Dymchurch Wall."

The last witch eloped with the ultimate smuggler, full seventy years since, but Romney Marsh remains, a beautiful open expanse of wide horizons, clear skies, and succulent pastures. The coastwise road runs across its levels, seven miles to New Romney, with the village of Dymchurch in between, Dymchurch Wall keeping out the sea. This, viewed from the inner side, is a lofty grassed earthen bank, faced seawards with a masonry "apron," as engineers style it; while at regular intervals the martello towers of an olden scheme of coast-defence are features of the way. Cobbett, writing in 1825, was very severe upon them:

"I had baited my horse," he writes, "at New Romney, and was coming jogging along very soberly, now looking at the sea, then looking at the cattle, then the corn, when my eye,

in swinging round, lighted upon a great round building, standing upon the beach. I had scarcely had time to think about what it could be, when twenty or thirty others, standing along the coast, caught my eye; and, if any one had been behind me, he might have heard me exclaim, in a voice that made my horse bound, ‘The *martello towers*, by ——!’ Oh, Lord! To think that I should be destined to behold these monuments of the wisdom of Pitt and Dundas and Perceval! Good G——! Here they are, piles of bricks in a circular form about three hundred feet (*guess*) circumference at the base, and about one hundred and fifty feet circumference at the top. There is a doorway, about midway up, in each, and each has two windows. Cannons were to be fired from the top of these things, in order to defend the country against the French Jacobins!

“I think I have counted along here upwards of thirty of these ridiculous things, which, I daresay, cost five, perhaps ten, thousand pounds each; and one of which was, I am told, *sold* on the coast of Sussex, the other day, for two hundred pounds! There is, they say, a chain of these things all the way to Hastings! I daresay they cost millions. But far indeed are these from being all, or half, or a quarter of the squanderings along here. Hythe is half *barracks*; the hills are covered with barracks, and barracks most expensive, most squandering, fill up the side of the hill. Here is a canal (I crossed it at Appledore) made for the length of thirty miles (from Hythe, in Kent, to Rye, in Sussex) to *keep*

out the French ; for, those armies who had so often crossed the Rhine and the Danube were to be kept back by a canal made by Pitt, thirty feet wide, at the most ! All along the coast there are works of some sort or other, incessant sinks of money ; walls of immense dimensions ; masses of stone brought and put into piles. Then you see some of the walls and buildings falling down ; some that have never been finished. The whole thing taken together," he concludes, "looks as if a spell had been, all of a sudden, set upon the workmen ; or, in the words of the Scripture, here is the '*desolation of abomination, standing in high places.*'"

The martello towers seem to have thoroughly obsessed Cobbett, for he presently bursts forth again, to tell us how they were "erected to keep out the Jacobin French, lest they should come and assist the Jacobin English. The *loyal* people of this coast were fattened by the building of them. Pitt and his loyal *Cinque Ports* waged interminable war against Jacobins. These very towers are now used to keep these *loyal* Cinque Ports themselves in order. These towers are now used to lodge men, whose business is to sally forth, not upon Jacobins, but upon *smugglers*. Thus, after having sucked up millions of the nation's money, these loyal Cinque Ports are squeezed again : kept in order, kept down, by the very towers which they rejoiced to see rise to keep down the Jacobins."

Seventy-six of these martello towers were erected along the flat places of the Kent and Sussex shores in the first years of the nineteenth century,

when Napoleon threatened us with invasion. They cost, according to their size, from £10,000 to £20,000 apiece, and were constructed of such a thickness of brick, with a vaulted brick roof, that they were thoroughly bomb-proof. The thickness of the brick walls varies from six feet on the rear, or landward, side, to nine feet facing the sea. The interior consists of a base, intended to serve as the magazine, with two rooms above, for the garrison. On the roof was mounted a swivel-gun, while on either side of each tower a howitzer was planted, as a flank defence. The martello towers are said to have been introduced from Italy, on whose Mediterranean coast, we are told, they had first been built for the purpose of defending the seaboard against the pirates who once infested those seas. It is even said that their name, "Torri di Martello," derives from the warning to neighbouring villages sounded on the approach of a pirate ship by striking a bell with a hammer, in Italian *martello*; but another derivation is given from a circular fort on the seashore at Martella, in Corsica, reduced only after severe fighting in the time of Nelson.

At any rate, they do not deserve the ridicule that has been showered upon them, from the time of their building until the present day. They had never an opportunity of being put to the test, for Napoleon thought better of his projected invasion; but time has been on the side of these much-abused forts, for Lord Kitchener's blockhouses

on the African veldt, not altogether remotely resembling them, were largely instrumental in bringing the weary and inglorious great Boer War to a close.

The history of the martello towers during the last few years, forms an interesting footnote to Cobbett's denunciations. Some, near Hythe, have been undermined and split in half by the sea, and others have been, at great labour and expense, demolished. Others yet have been let by the War Office at modest rentals to romantic people on the look out for something unconventional in the way of a seaside bungalow. Should any romantic reader of these pages desire to do the like, I have no doubt the War Office will be quite ready to let others of these forts that have never fought the foe. Indeed, now and again official advertisements may be seen, inviting tenders for renting some of them, for twelve months. The Department has by no means extravagant notions as to the value of them as "desirable residences," and an offer of £4 or £5 is pretty sure to win acceptance. It is not an extravagant rental, but, on the other hand, there are obvious drawbacks from a residential point of view. It is not every one who would be content with a home that looks externally like a gigantic pork-pie and has the defects of possessing but three rooms, one on the ground-floor (originally intended for a powder-magazine) with no windows, and two above, dimly illuminated by loopholes in the walls. Indeed, in the winter months life in a martello tower must

be almost as gloomy as in a prison. But summer, to be sure, brings compensations, for the interior is then apt to be delightfully cool, and the concreted roof, originally designed to hold a swivel-gun and other ordnance, forms an ideal platform for deck-chairs. Nor need this open-air life on the roof be at all exposed to the gaze of the public, for a four-foot parapet runs round, screening it from too great publicity.

We shall, however, better judge what Romney Marsh is like by mounting to the high lands that overlook it ; that ridge which is crested picturesquely by Lympne Church and Castle on the right, marking the ancient coast line in the times of the Romans. What is now the Marsh was then a shallow lagoon where the Roman vessels rode at anchor ; and to this day the remains of the Roman seaport of *Portus Lemanis*, called "Studfall Castle," strew the tumbled grassy slopes beneath Lympne Castle, in fragments of massive masonry. It is an excessively steep climb, past Botolph's Bridge, up to Lympne ; that "Lymme Hill, or Lyme," of which Camden wrote. He tells us, truly enough, that this "was sumtyme a famose haven, and good for shyppes that might come to the foot of the hille. The place is cawled Shipway or Old Haven. Farther, at thys daie the lord of the V ports kepeth his principal court a lytil by est from Lymme hill."

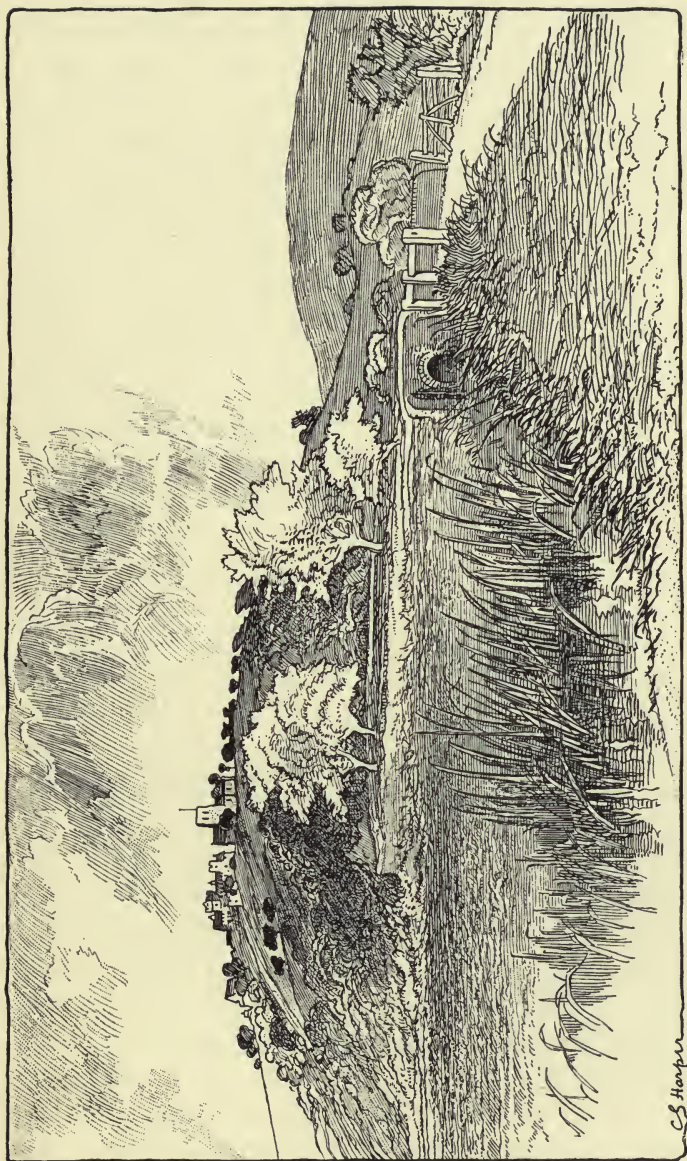
The Court of Shepway, to which Camden thus alludes, was the chief legislative and executive body of the Cinque Ports. It made the laws

governing that confederacy of ports, and pronounced decrees.

A subsidiary court of the Cinque Ports, inferior to the Court of Shepway, was in remote times held in the open air on Dymchurch beach. This was the "Court of Brodhull," and was later removed to Romney.

Shepway Court also was an open-air assembly, presided over by the Lord Warden. Here offenders were tried upon charges of high treason, failure of ship-service, false judgment, and treasure-trove. Process upon conviction was summary. Convicted disturbers of the King's peace, debasers of coin, and plunderers of ships or ships' gear to the value of twenty pence were at once drawn around Shepway on hurdles and afterwards hanged. An even more terrible fate awaited any jurat disclosing the King's counsel, his fellows and his own. He was bound hand and foot to a stake set upon the seashore where the tide ebbed and flowed, his throat was cut, and his tongue drawn out through the slit.

The Lord Warden was always, from the earliest times, sworn in at the Court of Shepway upon his appointment. The first Lord Warden was Earl Godwin. This ceremony continued here until 1597, when Lord Cobham took the oath at Bekesbourn. Meanwhile the business of the ancient Court had been transferred to Dover. The composition of this open-air assembly was, the Lord Warden, with the Mayor of Sandwich on his right and the Mayor of Dover on his left ; on the right



LYMPNE.

of the Mayor of Sandwich, the Mayor of Hastings ; and the Mayors of Romney, and Hythe, Winchelsea and Rye, Faversham, Folkestone, or Fordwich, Lydd, Pevensey or Seaford, and Tenterden, respectively in succession, right and left.

At Shepway Cross, on the hill-top, we turn left into Lympe, which was once pronounced locally as a two-syllabled word, " Limn-ey " ; obviously derived from the old Roman *Lemanis*. How or why the intruding " p " came into the place-name is unknown, and cannot be traced back further than Morden's map of Kent, about 1680.

The great Early English church adjoins the castle, originally one of the numerous seats of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and afterwards for centuries a farmhouse. This interesting building, with remains of fourteenth-century work, was sold about 1907 to Mr. F. J. Tennant, the millionaire brother-in-law of Mr. Asquith. Until that time the public had access to the place ; but it has since been restored and huge additions made, wholly changing the aspect of the spot. Before these developments it was possible to wander anywhere at will about the ruins of the castrum on the undercliff ; but now one is restricted, and goes between limits of barbed-wire, and hedged in with threatening prohibitions. It is to be observed that never before in all its history had the castle suffered siege or violence, until this transformation had been effected. And then its warlike history began, in the determined irruption of a band of those " bold, bad ones," the

silly suffragettes, who stormed the terraces and flung stones through the dining-room windows during one of Mr. Asquith's visits. The great gods laugh at the exquisite irony of the situation!

From the ridge on which Lympe is placed one looks down over the whole extent of Romney Marsh, with the Military Canal down in the foreground, and out in middle distance the curving sweep of the shore, accented at intervals by the line of martello towers. It is beautiful by day, but touched to nobility at night, under the gleam of the harvest moon.

Half a mile out of Lympe, on the way to Aldington, a rough and obscure lane turns to



LYMPNE CASTLE AND CHURCH.

the left, out of the road, between some new residences which have just been built. It is not at first a particularly inviting way, but it leads to a singular undercliff scene, where an ancient cottage, completely wrapped in creepers, even to roof and chimneys, stands on a plateau which has the appearance of having slid bodily half way down the cliff. This indeed is exactly what, in the words of Hasted, the historian of Kent, did happen one night in the year 1727. So evenly and silently did this take place that the farmer and his wife knew nothing of it until they awoke next morning to the new point of view presented from their windows. The cottage is known as the "French House," from the fine view hence of the coast of France.

Immediately at the end of the next hamlet, Court-at-Street, a steep, rough lane deeply sunk between rugged banks and overhung with trees leads down to the Marsh, or rather, to a little plateau or undercliff looking upon it. It is a beautiful view you get hence, a variant of other beautiful glimpses on the way from Lympne to Appledore, taking in the flat Marsh and the Royal Military Canal and the long sweep of coast curving to Dungeness. But something other than a mere view-point makes the spot interesting. It is a little building, roofless and otherwise in ruins, that stands there; a building with one remaining architectural feature in the shape of a late doorway, probably of the time of Henry the Seventh. This was anciently a chapel. The



ROMNEY MARSH : THE MARTELLO TOWERS AND MILITARY CANAL : MOONLIGHT.

reason of its being placed in a situation so obscure is lost, but there must have been an excellent one for such a choice, for mediæval chapels commonly stood, as shops do now, in positions that commanded traffic, and for the same reason : that they should secure the notice and the custom of wayfarers, by whose alms and offerings they were largely supported. At the time when the story presently to be told was enacted this chapel had already fallen upon evil times. Whatever relics it had possessed had—as modern theatrical managers say of their unsuccessful plays—“ failed to attract ”—and the hermit who once had lived there was gone.

But it has a late story of its own, a tragical story of the tragic and epoch-making age of Henry the Eighth. In those last few years when it was still roofed and weather-proof it was used by the cunning priests of a declining and damnable creed for the purpose of keeping alive their almost exploded superstitions. Reformation was in the air, in things spiritual and temporal alike, and the religious houses were presently to be dissolved and to be made loose their hold upon the large proportion of English soil they had accumulated by centuries of bequests. Some sign, any sign, was required by the doomed clergy of that age by which the pretensions of their class could be bolstered up and the actions of a King bent upon reform discredited ; and such a sign, the religious of Canterbury acutely believed, could be made to appear from the strange possession, demoniacal

or angelic—that had suddenly befallen a peasant girl in Aldington, one Elizabeth Barton, at that time a servant in the employ of Master Thomas Cobb, bailiff to the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. Cobb lived in the little house still standing at Aldington, and now known as “Cobb’s Hall,” and was startled when his maid-servant suddenly developed strange and terrifying behaviour, and began to rave on religious matters. To modern ideas the symptoms detailed in the lengthy old accounts of Elizabeth Barton’s career would seem to point to epileptic fits, followed by religious mania; but the simple folk of those times thought her inspired, and those others who were not so simple, and knew a good deal better, took excellent good care that the notion of her inspiration should be well nursed. Religious mania is generally the product of outside influences acting upon a diseased body and an ill-balanced mind; and it may be suspected, since the crisis in the affairs of the Church was then the chief topic in the mouths of all men, that Elizabeth had been influenced by the talk she heard, and by the preaching of the then rector of Aldington, Richard Masters. In her trances and somnambulistic exploits and in her ravings the ordinary people thought her possessed of evil spirits; but Richard Masters declared she had always been a devout girl, and he now professed, when called to her bedside, to have heard her say “very godly certain things concerning the seven deadly sins and the Ten Commandments.” This, in the view of

the Church, was inspiration. Masters journeyed to London, and at Lambeth Palace acquainted the old and failing Archbishop Warham with this strange portent, and was encouraged to keep diligent account of all her utterances.

And then Elizabeth Barton suddenly recovered, and was in the scullery again, cleaning pots and pans and dishes. We may picture the disappointment Masters experienced, on his return, to find his prodigy become suddenly so commonplace.

But it was too late for this poor Elizabeth to be allowed to return obscurely to her domestic duties. Cobb's house was besieged by the curious, who came merely to look at her, and by the superstitious, who had heard she could prophesy, and by the ailing, who thought that a laying on of hands would cure them.

Two monks were brought over from Canterbury, to make a religious seer and prophetess of her, and Cobb was persuaded that the best room in the house, and not the scullery, was her proper place. These two emissaries, Doctor Bocking and Dan William Hadley, gave her a course of instruction in the *Acta Sanctorum*, and taught her to believe herself of the company of saints and equal to such miraculous deeds as theirs. Thus arose the title by which she is known in history, the "Holy Maid of Kent." She now experienced a recurrence of her cataleptic states, but appears more often to have made a pretence of them. Her instructors removed her at this junct-

ture to this lonely Chapel of Our Lady at Court-at-Street, which had for some time past, with the general decay of pilgrimage and the growing disbelief in relics, been doing very badly. The removal was made the occasion for a great and striking religious procession, and two thousand persons assembled to witness a promised miracle: a promise said to have been made to Elizabeth by the Virgin Mary that she should be cured if she visited that shrine. Elizabeth was carried to the place, with every appearance of severe affliction, "her face wondrously disfigured, her tongue hanging out, and her eyes being in like manner plucked out and lying upon her cheek. There was then heard a voice speaking within her belly, as it had been in a tunnel, her lips not greatly moving; she all that while continuing by the space of three hours or more in a trance."

And the voice spoke of the joys of heaven and the torments of hell and of the efficacy of pilgrimage and the beauty of giving to Holy Church.

"And," continues the account, "after she had lyen there a long time, she came to herself again, and was perfectly whole." It was, in short, a very clever and successful exhibition of acting and ventriloquy, and completely captured the crowd.

The Virgin now desired her to repair to the Priory of St. Sepulchre at Canterbury, and to assume the name of Sister Elizabeth and take Dr. Bocking for her spiritual instructor. There she was gradually coached into religious and political

prophecies, and began to launch threats against the King in respect of his divorce and of his proposed marriage with Anne Boleyn. She declared—and forced her way into his presence at Canterbury, on his return from France, to declare it—that he should not reign a month after that marriage and should die “a villain’s death.” But the King, quite unmoved, married as he had intended, and a month passed, and he seemed none the worse. The Holy Maid, like many another prophet before and since, was obliged to move the date of the anticipated retribution forward, and still the vengeance of Heaven did not descend. The obvious inference is that Elizabeth was not in the confidence of Providence; but through the reports of the monks of Canterbury, who spread the most extraordinary accounts of her life in the Priory, in which the devil in person was said to have appeared, in an attempt to committ an indecent assault upon her, she was widely looked upon as divinely inspired. Sir Thomas More, regarded by all competent persons as one of the most learned and cultured persons of that age, believed in her.

For three years she continued her extraordinary career of fraud and blasphemy, and then the heavy hand of the King descended upon her and her accomplices. One can only feel surprised that it had been delayed so long, for Henry the Eighth was not usually long-suffering under insult.

She was hanged, with Doctor Bocking and

others of her accomplices in religious deceptions and political offences, April 21st, 1534, at Tyburn. "Hither," said she, in her dying speech and confession, "I am come to die. I have been not only the cause of mine own death, which most justly I have deserved, but am also the cause of the death of all these persons who at this time here suffer. And yet I am not so much to be blamed, considering that it was well known unto these learned men that I was a poor wench without learning, and therefore they might have easily perceived that the things which were done by me could not proceed in no such sort; but their capacities and learning could right well judge that they were altogether feigned. But because the things which I feigned were profitable unto them, therefore they much praised me, and bare me in hand that it was the Holy Ghost, and not I that did them."

This, with much else, she confessed, admitting among other things that a letter purporting to have been written by the Virgin Mary, in heaven, and sent to a widow in London, was written by a St. Augustine's monk named Hawkhurst.

Aldington church tower rises in stately massiveness amid the plain of Aldington Frith—"Aldington Fright," as the country people call it. It is a noble, though an unfinished building, begun about 1507, and in progress until 1537. Those were not favourable times for new church works, and the Archbishop's palace—one of his many palaces—close by, dated its decay from the

same period. Nothing is left of his park of more than a thousand acres, and of the palace itself, its five kitchens, eight dove-houses, six stables, nine barns, and other appurtenances on an equally generous scale, nothing now remains but some few architectural fragments built into the walls of a comparatively modern house.

Aldington is notable not only from its connection with the story of the Holy Maid, but also because Erasmus was rector here for a short period. His appointment in 1511 by Archbishop Warham was something in the nature of a scandal, however well-meaning its object, which was to provide him, as a learned, but poor, scholar, with a livelihood. Erasmus was a Dutchman, quite ignorant of the English language, however well versed in Latin; and either his awakened conscience, or the growing indignation of the people of Aldington at having a tongue-tied alien thrust upon them, presently led to his resigning. A charge of £20 per annum, then a large sum, fully equal to £200 present value, was then made upon the living, and paid by his successor for his support. After a short interval, Richard Masters, who figured prominently in the affair of the Holy Maid, was appointed, and with varying fortunes he held the rectory until his death, in 1558.

Beyond this we may fitly turn down again to the Marsh, past Bonnington church, a tiny building standing close beside the Military Canal. Thence across the levels, by winding roads, the way goes to Newchurch, "new" so long ago that

the origin is lost in antiquity. It is a typical Marshland village, and the heavy tower of the church itself leans forward in a manner suggesting imminent collapse. It has probably suggested the same idea for three hundred years, or more ; and so there is certainly no immediate danger. Hereabouts the sheep are the chief animate objects. Romney Marsh was ever a region fa-



BONNINGTON CHURCH.

mous for its flocks, and from the earliest times the smugglers who smuggled wool out of the country, regardless of the strict penal laws against the exportation of fleeces, were more important than those who smuggled goods inwards. They had their own special designation, and were known as "owlers," probably in the first instance from their signalling in the night with calls like those of the owls.

There are no "shepherds" here, on the Marsh. They are, in local parlance, "lookers." When the agricultural labourer in these parts takes up with "ship," he announces, "I be a-going a-looking"; looking being, in fact, a variety of shepherding peculiar to these surroundings, with special terms and conditions.

To trace these byways of the Marsh in spring, say in the third week of May, when the thorn-trees are in bloom, is an experience to be remembered; it is the best time of all the year to see Romney Marsh. Then such remote spots as Ivychurch, in the very middle of it, seem idyllic. "Ivychurch" does not, by the way, take its name, as might be supposed, from ivy, but has its root in "ea," for water, having originally been situated on an islanded knoll ever so little raised above the level of the wet marshes. The term "Marsh," it should be said, survives although the roads and byways are now as dry as those of other scenes, thanks to the constant care of the jurats and other officers whose functions are to keep the dykes deeply delved, the sluices in order, and Dymchurch Wall in repair. In default of these, Romney Marsh, or the greater portion of it, would again be drowned, for it is at a lower level than the sea.

CHAPTER XXIV

NEW ROMNEY—SMUGGLING DAYS—BROOKLAND—
FAIRFIELD—SMALLHYTHE

THE town of New Romney, new nine hundred years ago, is located afar off, not by its houses, which are few indeed, but by the trees that encircle it, and give a very direct denial to its urban claims. Founded to replace Old Romney, deserted by the sea, as a seaport, the sea began again to retreat so long ago as Queen Elizabeth's time, and is now a mile and a half to two miles distant, at the melancholy and hopeless-looking cluster of houses known as Littlestone-on-Sea, where there are golf-links on which Parliamentary matches are played. There the opposing champions in the House of Commons contend amicably, much to the surprise of the general public, who imagine—poor fools—that all the fury and tub-thumping at Westminster is honest emotion, and do not realise that it is all part of the great Game of Make-Believe for which, whether amused or not, we have all to pay.

There were once no fewer than five churches at New Romney. Now there is but one. "Here," wrote Cobbett, in 1825, "there is a church (two

miles only from the last, mind !) fit to contain one thousand five hundred people, and there are, for the people of this parish to live in, twenty-two or twenty-three houses ! And yet the *vagabonds* have the impudence to tell us that the population of England has vastly increased."



NEW ROMNEY CHURCH.

The "vagabonds" pilloried in this wrong-headed outburst were quite correct ; the population had indeed greatly increased, but that of New Romney and Old Romney alike had, for the best of reasons, declined. Moreover, Cobbett did not know—nor do people generally stop to consider—that the numerous and roomy old churches throughout the country do not neces-

sarily give the measure of the ancient population. As even now, the size or frequency of churches depended to a great extent upon the comparative piety and wealth of the neighbourhood.

The great church of St. Nicholas, the surviving one of New Romney, is a fine specimen of the late Norman style, with tombs of the old Mayors and jurats. The floor-level is so much below the level of the ground outside that one descends several steps into the building. The town itself is scarcely less quiet and undisturbed than the interior of the church itself. It is still technically a Cinque Port, and a Mayor is annually elected. Also there is something in the nature of a town gaol ; but it is a curiosity rather than a necessity.

I cull this interesting item from a newspaper of October 1913, to show something of the quiet that has now descended upon the place.

“SINLESS CINQUE PORT.—During the last six months the fines and fees at the police court of New Romney, the ancient borough and Cinque Port, have amounted to 2s. In this time only one minor case was heard, although the borough, which includes Littlestone-on-Sea, has a Mayor and eight magistrates, as well as three policemen.

A very different New Romney from that of centuries ago, which was a place such as Longfellow wrote of, with—

“ . . . The black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free ;
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.”

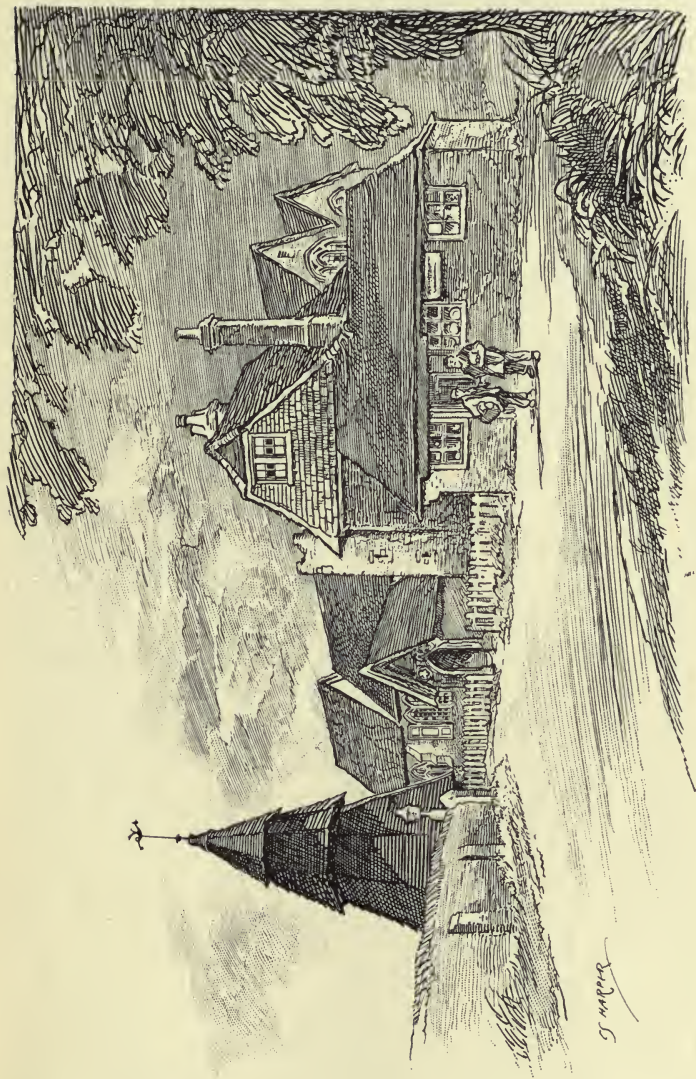
But the town, although reduced in size, experienced a gorgeous time centuries later ; a time that ended only in the early years of the nineteenth century. The sea had gone out of sight, but the smuggling trade brought much wealth here.

This was indeed an ideal district for the smugglers who infested the coasts of Kent and Sussex. Every dyke—or “dick,” as the country people pronounce the word—was a temporary storehouse for tubs of contraband spirits, placed there on hurried occasions, until leisure could be found to convey them into more private hiding ; and those enterprising revenue officers who on fine days wandered the marshes with iron rods, probing at a venture among the reeds and bulrushes, not infrequently made lucky discoveries.

But it was when night had shut down, thick and rimy, over these levels that in those old times they woke to business. Many a cargo of gin or cognac, successfully landed along the coast on the Kentish or the Sussex side of the Rother, was conveyed by the smugglers' labourers across Guilford Level and Walling Marsh, and no one in the neighbourhood who observed how usually flush of money were the agricultural labourers of the surrounding villages was in the least mystified as to the source of their gains. Those men knew better than any others the obscure paths and short-cuts of the levels, and could in any weather pick their way with certainty in places where those less expert would presently find them-

selves at the best confronted by an impassable dyke ; or, at the worst of it, floundering in profound depths of mud and water. History informs us very fully of the ferocious nature of the Kentish and Sussex smugglers, who were by no means afraid of blood-guiltiness ; but there can be no doubt that most of the mysterious disappearances of revenue men from time to time from this neighbourhood were caused by mischances at the dykes in foggy weather, and not by violence.

The marsh-men, the shepherds, and the agricultural labourers around Brookland took part in an exceptionally furious encounter between smugglers and a force of preventive men and naval blockaders that was fought one night in February 1821. The goods had been landed to the west of Rye, near Camber Castle, and a party of two hundred men had assembled on the beach, to carry the tubs inland, when the landing was rather belatedly discovered by the Naval Blockade look-out. An alarm was raised, and a force of sailors from the Blockade, led by officers, was sent in pursuit. The conduct of the smugglers sufficiently shows their effective organisation. They did not fling away their tubs and run. Not at all. Their march inland, past the solitary Great Cheyne Court, towards Brookland was carried out with all the precision of a well-ordered military retreat. They were not unprepared for attack, and, besides those who did the carrying, there were the " batsmen," armed with the formidable weapons called " bats," stout poles



BROOKLAND CHURCH.

from six to eight feet long, and other men who carried firearms. These protectors fought a kind of rearguard action, covering the disposal of the contraband, and did it so well that although the naval officers frequently dashed forward, sword in hand, at the head of their men, they made little impression. The retreat, in good order, and the firing lasted until daybreak, when the tubs had all been hidden and it was only left for the fighting men to disperse. An officer named Mackenzie was killed in this affair, together with four smugglers, while the wounded comprised three officers, six sailors, and sixteen smugglers. Two smugglers, Cephas Quested and Richard Wraight, were captured, the first mistaking an officer in the dark for a comrade, the other losing touch with his fellows and walking into the arms of the enemy. Quested was hanged at Newgate.

Old Romney, two miles inland from Romney the new, is so immemorially old that the days when the sea flowed to it, and the ships came to its quays, are altogether forgotten. Sheep graze in fertile pastures, and never a sign of the sea is evident. Yet there was a time when the waters flowed inland to Appledore and Tenterden, a matter of eight miles, and it is an historical fact that the Danish fleet sailed to Appledore in A.D. 893. The very road by which the marsh is crossed between New Romney and Appledore is a Roman causeway, or embankment, still known as the Rhee Wall, along whose sides the waters lapped.

Beyond Old Romney, in the midst of Walland Marsh, is Brookland, whose church is notable for its detached wooden tower, leaning to one side, painted or tarred black, and in the shape of three extinguishers, placed each upon the other. The windows are provided with wooden shutters as a protection against the winds that blow, unrestrained, across these levels. The ancient leaden font, one of the twenty-nine leaden fonts in England, is of the early part of the thirteenth century, and is decorated in relief with the signs of the zodiac, and with figures illustrating the labours of the months. It is a curious relic, and by far the most interesting of the twenty-nine. The inscriptions above each month are in Norman-French: "Janvier, Fevrier, Mars, Avril, Mai, Juin, Juillet, Avovt, Setembre, Vitovre, Novembre, Desembre." January is represented by a two-faced Janus, seated at a table; February by a man sitting by a fire; March, a husbandman pruning a vine; April, a bare-headed figure, robed, and in either hand a blossoming branch; May, a sporting knight on horseback, carrying a hawk on his left wrist; June, a mower; July, hayraking; August, reaping; September, threshing; October, wine-pressing; November, a swineherd knocking down acorns, while a pig feeds on them; and December, a man with an axe, killing a pig.

Among the monuments in Brookland church is a table-tomb to John and Thomas Plomer, father and son, jurats of New Romney, and their

family. One, we learn, was "Captain of ye selecte board, sometime burgis at ye parliament for ye same towne, who was one of the portes Barons in carrying ye canopie at the coronation of King James ye first of England."

Among the curious churches of this region, that of Fairfield, two miles north-west from Brookland, is well worth visiting. It is not a large



FAIRFIELD CHURCH.

church, nor beautiful, being, indeed, one of that very numerous company popularly supposed to be the "smallest," and of a quaint, rather barn-like, appearance. It is not, in fact, the "smallest church in England," that distinction belonging to the little church of Culbone, in Somerset, which is thirty-three feet in length. The length of Fairfield church is about forty feet, and it is

thus somewhere about the same size as Bonnington. But it is very much less ecclesiastical in appearance, being chiefly of seventeenth-century red brick.

There is no village of Fairfield, and there are but two houses in sight in the flat marshland. Away in the distance you see the church of Stone in Oxney, cresting the uplands; the skylarks are singing madly in the May skies, and sheep are grazing; but it is a solitary spot. Dykes with tall rushes encircle the church, which for some years before 1913 had been closed, and was fallen into a ruinous condition. In the roof of this little building, dedicated to St. Thomas à Becket, there were holes; the small timber bellcote was all on one side, and, of its three bells, one of them was cracked. The windows were broken, the wind-shutters hanging down from them, forlorn. Through the broken casements one might see the whitewashed interior, with the tiny chancel, scarcely lofty enough for a man of average height to stand in, upright, and the tall wooden pews: the whole a roosting-place for birds. The deserted building was at last restored, chiefly from funds granted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Fairfield is in summer a prime curiosity; in winter, the church is generally inaccessible, through being entirely cut off by flood-water. "A dark place," said a contemplative, solitary man, met in these wilds. Spiritually dark, he meant. In other ways, Fairfield, standing amid clear, wide horizons, with not a tree near it, is

a place of exceptional light and sunshine. The colour of the marshes is vivid and lovely ; and not less lovely is the golden hue of the lichened, red-tiled old roof of Fairfield church itself, seen from a little distance.

There was a time when even Tenterden, now more than ten miles from the sea, was by way of being in touch with it, through the little port of Smallhythe, whose name is sometimes seen spelled on maps "Small Hithe." This remote little place, some two miles south of Tenterden, on a by-road, stands strangely at a passage into the so-called "Isle of Oxney," which nowadays presents the appearance of an inland island, so to speak. Looking at a map, no one would at the first glance suspect Oxney of being an isle, but close inspection discovers the fact that it is indeed surrounded by the Rother and its tributaries, and a canal. In olden times, when the Rother



SMALLHYTHE TOLL-GATE.

was a broad estuary, Oxney was an isle in very sooth, and it was possible for the not very large vessels of those ages to be navigated to Smallhythe. In the reign of Edward the Third, according to tradition, the harbour dues were greater than those of Liverpool at the same time ; and the sea is recorded to have flowed to its quays certainly so late as 1508.

“ Smallhead,” as the country people call it, is nowadays little like a port. Its street is blocked by a toll-gate leading to a ferry across the narrow stream. Here the pedestrian is mulcted of one farthing. If he have a cycle, his total expenditure is one halfpenny. Toll for a horse and cart is 6*d.* ; for a traction-engine with one truck attached, 10*d.* ; for a horse, mule, or ass, 1*d.* ; bullock, cow, calf, or pig, $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* ; and sheep, 4*d.* per score. “ We make everything pay,” says the gatekeeper, “ ’cept a dog.” The gate is private property, and was purchased some years ago for £600. The tolls then yielded over £1 a week ; but the income has greatly fallen since the other ferries into the isle were freed.

Smallhythe has the unusual privilege of electing its own vicar, instead of running the risk—sometimes the very real risk—of having to receive a *persona non grata* foisted upon the parish by a patron not in touch with the needs of the place. The electors are the householders and occupiers of land in the parish. This privilege arose out of the establishment of the church in 1509. Until then, the nearest was Tenterden church, but War-

ham, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, was induced to license one here because of the complaints made by the inhabitants of the bad state of the roads.

The election takes place always on a Sunday, and the voting is given in the church-vestry. Should an election not be held within six months of the living becoming vacant, the privilege lapses



SMALLHYTHE CHURCH.

and the presentation becomes the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The last election was held May 7th, 1899, when the Rev. C. E. Pizey was chosen, by a majority of one, to succeed his father, deceased. He afterwards resigned, and the unsuccessful candidate, Mr. Raven, was appointed in his stead.

The church is a small building of red brick,



SMALLHYTHE.

with red-brick mullions to its windows—a curious example of early sixteenth-century work. Of the charming old black-and-white half-timbered houses adjoining, that next the toll-gate is the residence of Miss Ellen Terry.

CHAPTER XXV

LYDD—DUNGENESS—CAMBER-ON-SEA

THREE miles from New Romney, across the levels, is the remote little town of Lydd, in the midst of Dunge Marsh. Its remoteness rendered Lydd a suitable place for artillery-camps and the surrounding wastes a favourable location for practice with high explosives. It was here, indeed, that "Lyddite" was invented. The town nestles within a group of trees—whether planted for shelter, or just by chance, it would be difficult to say. Its chief glories are the fine old church, well known as the "Cathedral of the Marsh," and the brewery. In the vast interior of the church lie the old Mayors and jurats of the brave times of yore. In the churchyard one may read the epitaph of

"LIEUT. THOS EDGAR of the Royal Navy
who departed this life Oct^r 17th 1801

Aged 56 years.

He came into the Navy at 10 Years of age
was in that memorable Engagement
with Adm^l Hawk & sail'd round the World
in company with the unfortunate
Captain Cook of the Resolution
in his last Voyage when he was killed
by the Indians at the Island of O whie
in the South Seas the 14th Feby 1778

Tom Edgar at last has sail'd out of this World
 His shroud is put on & his top sails are furld
 He lies snug in deaths boat without any Concern
 And is moor'd for a full due ahead & a Stern
 O'er the Compass of Life he has merrily run
 His Voyage is Completed, his reckoning is done."

Here too, is an epitaph on a smuggler, one George Walker, who was shot in 1819 :

"Let it be known that I am clay,
 A bace man took my life away ;
 Yet freely do I him forgive,
 And hope in Heaven we both shall live.

"Wife and children I've left behind,
 And to the Lord I them resign.
 I hope he will their steps attend
 And bring them to a happy end."

The ancient Chamberlain's accounts of about 1475 show that misdemeanants had the very worst of times at Lydd. First we find it ordered "That anyone found cuttyng or pikeyng purses, or other goods of lytille value, be brought to the high strete and there his ere nayled to a post or cart whele." Then follows: "Paid for naylyng of Thomas Norys is ere 12*d*." There was a grim quality about the justice of those times. A knife was handed to the offender, so that he might release himself by cutting off his ear whenever he chose. The term of imprisonment therefore depended entirely upon himself.

The conservative qualities of Lydd may perhaps be judged by the fact that the Mayor,



LYDD CHURCH.

Alderman Edwin Finn, brewer, has been elected to the office thirty-one years ; thus far outdistancing the record of FitzAilwyn, Mayor of London twenty-two years.

Lydd is the place whence Dungeness, four and a quarter miles distant, is most readily arrived at. The best-advised explorers go by train. Others, who walk it, generally wish they had not. It is a specious and alluring road, starting fairly enough, and at the end of two miles still fairly easy walking ; but thenceforward all road disappears. Even the track vanishes, and the pedestrian plunges wistfully on,

through loose shingle, guiding his course by the more seaward of the two lighthouses. Knowing ones walk along the railway line; but that is not an inspiring exercise.

Dungeness, as described by Lambarde in 1567, is a "Neshe, called in Saxon nesse, which seemeth to be derived of the Latin Nasus, and signifieth a Nebbe or Nose of the land extended into the Sea."

"Before this Neshe," he continues, "lieth a flat into the Sea, threatening great danger to unadvised Sailers." It is indeed the most remarkable projection—hardly to be called a promontory, for that indicates also a height—along the coast of Kent, and makes a bold figure on the map, thrusting itself in a striking manner well into the Channel. In that, and in the singularity of it being merely a flat, shingly extension of Dunge and Walling marshes, lies its great menace to all shipping. A promontory, such as either of the Forelands, could be easily distinguished from the sea; but at night and in hazy weather this land is readily to be mistaken for water, as many ships for centuries past have disastrously found. A great aggravation of these sufficient perils is constituted by the remarkable depth of water existing close inshore. The shingle rises steeply, twenty-two feet out of the sea, and large steamers of deep draught can, and do, come quite close in.

The natural perils of Dungeness were greatly aggravated from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards by the new lofty tower of Lydd church, built by Cardinal Wolsey. Complaints

were bitterly made of it. The tower, it was said, in the reign of James the First, resembled from the sea "the forme of the saile of some talle shippe," leading unfortunate mariners in uncertain lights to steer directly for the shore and destruction.

From this and other causes Dungeness became as dangerous and fatal a flat as the Goodwins, and it was stated that in one winter no fewer than a thousand bodies had been collected on the shore, and £100,000 value of merchandise had been lost. These facts attracted speculators in the era of the first James, and Sir Edward Howard, the King's Cupbearer, about 1615 erected a lighthouse here, petitioning the King to grant him a patent for levying dues upon passing shipping. The Trinity House, of course, opposed—it was the *métier* of the Trinity House in those times to oppose every new proposition for lighting the dark and dangerous places; but Sir Edward secured his patent. He soon, however, found it difficult to collect his dues, and disposed of his interest to one William Lamplough, Clerk of the King's Kitchen. This person soon bestirred himself to secure the full advantage of the rights he had thus acquired, and through his influence at Court obtained the aid of the customs officers for the enforcement of them, a strenuous course of action which in turn stirred up the ship-owners and the Trinity House, who made common cause and jointly promoted a Parliamentary Bill in 1621, providing for the suppression of the light, de-

scribed by them as a nuisance to navigation. It will be clearly perceived that the light only began to be a "nuisance" to the ship-owners when they were required to pay something towards the upkeep of it. On the other hand, Lamplough—entirely in keeping with his name—neglected the quality of his illumination—a thing commonly done in those times and long after by lighthouse-keepers. He was warned to snuff his candles more diligently, and to improve the light in general. The Bill was thrown out and Lamplough continued in possession. Then the town of Rye caused a Bill to be drafted, seeking to take possession of the lighthouse, on the plea that the first idea for such a light had emanated from Rye, and promising to devote the income from the dues collected to the improvement of the harbour. But this attempt to deprive Lamplough also failed, and in 1635 he is found rebuilding his lighthouse on a larger and more substantial plan.

Dungeness light gradually proved its great usefulness, but by some means Lamplough's successor fell into difficulties and could not, or would not, pay his ground-rent to his landlord, the Earl of Thanet, who went so far as to threaten to pull down the lighthouse. This was in the time of the Commonwealth, and the resourceful lighthouse-keeper appealed to Cromwell, who decided that it "was not right that the safety of many lives and of the State's ships should be left to the will of the Earl of Thanet." The

upshot of this trouble between the defiant tenant and the baffled landlord is obscure.

The next building, dating from 1792, was, an inscription on it states: "Erected by Thomas William Coke, Esq., in the county of Norfolk, instead of the old lighthouse, which originally stood 540 yards to the northward, and which, by means of the land increasing from the violence of the sea, became useless to navigation."

This old building was but 100 feet from the sea at low water. It is now more than a quarter of a mile distant, and the point of shingle still steadily accumulates, in the strong eastward drift, at the rate of six feet a year.

A newer lighthouse was built in 1904, and rises to a height of 130 feet, with a low light, fifty-five feet. The tower is of brick, and is distinguished by being painted chocolate, relieved with a deep white band. The light displayed is a fixed oil-beam, replacing the electric light, whose white glare, installed a good many years ago, was found to be incapable of penetrating fogs so easily as the more yellow rays of oil. The lower light exhibits a flash; and a foghorn, working on a high and a low note, forms an auxiliary warning in thick weather.

Dungeness, one of the most remarkable places in England, is like no other place than itself: a waste of shingle, with here and there a sparse patch of gorse stretching as far as the eye can reach, and with a little single-track railway running out from Lydd and expiring close by the



DUNGENESS : LIGHTHOUSE AND RAILWAY STATION.

Lighthouse, at Dungeness "station": a primitive hut without booking-office, signals, or any other of the usual appurtenances of ordinary railway management. The guard of trains in-coming or departing collects and issues tickets, and is, in his many other small duties, a host in himself. It is generally a source of surprise among strangers to find the South-Eastern Railway Company has considered it worth while to build a line to Dungeness at all; but the explanation is found in the ballast-trucks frequently despatched with loads of the inexhaustible shingle, for use along the line and elsewhere.

The loose shingle comprising this vast waste of Dungeness is some eight or nine feet deep, and most difficult and exhausting to walk upon. Indeed, the only way to progress for any distance upon it is by wearing upon the feet the contrivances called "backstays," which are simply boards five inches wide and some nine or ten inches long.

They serve exactly the purpose fulfilled by snow-shoes, and prevent or stay one from slipping back. They are sometimes called "beach-pattens." They are fastened either by straps over the boots, or are worn on the naked feet by passing the straps over the instep and round the big toe. Carts have their wheels cased in wood to a width of eighteen inches.

Wild-birds still make the shingle-wastes of Dungeness their nesting-place. In two marshy and reedy ponds near the sea the blackheaded gull breeds, and the stone-curlew and the rare Kentish plover linger, protected by the Wild Birds Act, and by the appointment of a watcher to see that no one takes the eggs. It requires, as a rule, a trained eye and sharp eyesight to detect the eggs, simply laid among the large and small pebbles, and scarcely distinguishable from them; but many might search for them were it not for this specially appointed guardian of these now rare species.

Among the few houses—the coastguard-station, the general-shop (whose proprietor is also Dutch Consul), and the half-dozen others that constitute this settlement under the illimitable, uninterrupted sky—one walks about on old railway-sleepers laid down in the shingle: the only paths in the place.

The most disastrous happening connected with Dungeness was the wreck of the *Northfleet* on the night of January 22nd, 1873. The *Northfleet* was a sailing-vessel of 940 tons, built about

1853 at Northfleet near Gravesend, and was bound for Hobart, Tasmania, with a cargo of railway material and some 300 navvies and their wives and children. There were in all some 400 people aboard. The *Northfleet* passed Deal "all well," and although the weather was rough, the sky was clear when the vessel anchored for the night two miles off Dungeness. By half-past ten all the passengers had turned in, and all seemed comfortable for the night, when a steamer was observed coming at full speed directly for the *Northfleet*. Shouts were raised, in vain, and the strange vessel crashed into the *Northfleet* amidships. Instantly a terrifying panic arose, and in the midst of it the steamer that had caused the disaster cleared off and steamed away, without offering a helping hand, and leaving the unfortunate people to drown. Captain Knowles, of the *Northfleet*, had only just been promoted to the position, from that of chief officer, in succession to Captain Oates, who had been required by the Treasury as a witness in the Tichborne Case. He had been served with a subpoena, and prevented at the last moment from sailing. The last seen of Captain Knowles, who went down with his ship, was a view of him, revolver in hand, endeavouring to stay the frantic rush of passengers for the boats and to secure first place for the women and children.

The *Northfleet* sank in three quarters of an hour, and over 300 people went down with her. Eighty-five were saved by the *City of London*

steam-tug, the Kingsdown lugger *Mary*, and the pilot-cutter *Princess*.

There seems no reasonable doubt that the cause of the disaster was the Spanish steamer *Murillo*, bound from Antwerp for Lisbon, Cadiz, and Gibraltar with iron rails. The affair was denied by the Spanish captain, officers, and crew of the *Murillo*, but stated positively by the two engineers and a passenger, the only three Englishmen on board, who, as the newspaper reports at the time stated, proved superior to the threats and intimidation which had closed the mouths of the rest. The *Murillo* was examined by the Spanish authorities, and declared to bear no traces of the collision, and so was released. That unsatisfactory finding was the last ever heard of the affair.

Nine miles of coastline lead from Dungeness to Camber-on-Sea, passing on the way the solitary "Hope and Anchor" inn, and three coastguard-stations. At Camber the recently opened light railway from Rye is reached, together with the channel of the river Rother. There, ahead, stands the old town of Rye, perched upon its hill, in Sussex. The Kentish Coast is ended.

INDEX

ABBEY WOOD, 26
 Acol, 136
 Aldington, 333, 336, 340
 Allhallows Fort, 48
 Augustine, St., 67, 180, 182-5

 BARTON, ELIZABETH, 336-41
 Bell's Hard, 48
 Beltinge, 121
 Beluncle, 50
 Belvedere, 26, 28
 Birchington, 136-8, 142
 Bonnington, 341
 "Botany Bay," 156
 Broadstairs, 158, 160-4, 227
 Brookland, 348-51

 CÆSAR, JULIUS, 3, 219
 Camber-on-Sea, 369
 Chalk, 40
 Channel Tunnel, 285, 301-3
 Charles II, 4, 16, 18, 52, 157
 Chatham, 52, 58-62
 Chislett, 124
 Cinque Ports, The, 168, 194-201, 281, 310, 326, 330, 346
 Cliffe, 41
 Cliffs' End, 178, 185
 Cliftonville, 156
 Coal in Kent, 285, 303-5
 Cobbett, William, 219, 259, 281-3, 324-6, 344
 Cobb's Hall, 336, 338
 Conyers Quay, 100, 101
 Cooling, 42-5
 Court-at-Street, 334
 Crayford, 29

DANDELION, 141
 Dartford, 29, 31
 Davington, 88, 102, 122
 Deal, 3, 197, 214-27, 234, 241
 Denton Wharf, 38
 Deptford, 2, 5-14
 Dover, 3, 4, 196, 243, 259, 269-98, 330
 Downs, The, 241
 Dungeness, 38, 197, 324, 334, 361-9
 Dymchurch, 324, 330, 343

 EASTCHURCH, 81
 Ebbsfleet, 3, 178-80, 182-5
 Egypt Bay, 47
 Elmley, 84
 Erasmus, 341
 Erith, 2, 26, 29
 Evelyn, John, 11, 13, 53, 240

 FAIRFIELD, 352
 Faversham, 3, 86, 88, 91-3, 102, 103, 197
 Folkestone, 4, 197, 301, 306-15
 Funton, 66

 GILLINGHAM, 63
 Godwin, Earl, 104, 231, 278, 330
 Goodnestone, 104
 Goodwin Sands, 158, 227-52, 267
 Grain, Isle of, 3, 49
 Grange, or Grench, 64
 Graveney, 104
 Gravesend, 2, 36-8
 Greenhithe, 32

Greenwich, 2, 5, 15-23

— Hospital, 15-18

Grove Ferry, 124

HARTY, 83, 86

Hengist and Horsa, 3, 179

Henry VIII, 9, 15, 200, 220-2,

228, 286, 316, 319, 339

Herne, 118-21

Herne Bay, 3, 116-18

High Halstow, 47

Hillborough, 121

Holy Maid of Kent, 336-41

Hoo, Hundred of, 47-56, 59, 63

— St. Mary, 47, 48

— St. Werburgh, 50-52

Huggens's College, 34

✓ Hythe, 196, 197, 320-3, 325

INGRESS ABBEY, 33

Ivychurch, 343

Iwade, 66, 94

JAMES II, 83, 86, 88-91

KINGSDOWN, 234, 256, 260

Kingsferry, 66, 68

Kingsgate, 156-8

Kingsnorth, Medway Airship
Base, 50

LESNES ABBEY, 26-8

Leysdown, 82

Littlestone-on-Sea, 344

Lower Halstow, 65

Lower Rainham, 64

Lower Stoke, 49

Luddenham, 102

Lydd, 197, 359-61

Lydden Spout, 306

✓ Lympne, 329-33

MARGATE, 1, 130, 141, 144-56,

197, 227, 243

Martello towers, 316, 324-9

Martin Cross, 261

Medway River, 2, 50, 52, 56, 59

Military Canal, The, 319, 323,
325, 333, 334, 341

Milton Regis (or Milton-next-
Sittingbourne), 94, 95-9

Minster-in-Sheppey, 70, 73-8

✓ Minster-in-Thanel, 125, 130-6,
185

Monkton, 129, 130

Murston, 99

NEWCHURCH, 341

New Romney, 196, 197, 207,

283, 324, 344-7, 350, 351

Northfleet, 33, 368

✓ North Foreland, 157, 158-60

North Woolwich, 24

OARE, 88, 92

"Old Fubbs Yacht" inn, 18-
20

✓ Old Romney, 207, 344, 350

Old Wives' Leaze, 104

Otterham Creek, 64

Oxney, Isle of, 354

✓ Oyster Fishery, 108-14

PARKSORE, 65

Pegwell Bay, 1, 168, 169, 177,
300

Pepys, Samuel, 8, 11, 53, 72

Perry Street, 29

Peter the Great, 11-13

Pett, Peter, 8

Plumstead, 26

Port Victoria, 50

Princess Alice disaster, 25

QUEENBOROUGH, 71

Quex, 136-40

RAMSGATE, 1, 130, 142, 144,

167-76, 197, 210, 233, 234,

237, 243, 267, 288

✓ Reculver (*Regulbium*), 118, 121-
3, 124, 186, 195, 197

✓ Richborough (*Rutupium*), 124,
125, 186, 195, 202

Ringwould, 261

- Rochester, 2, 56-60
 Romney Marsh, 282, 324, 329,
 333, 341-3
 Romney, New, 196, 197, 207,
 283, 324, 344-7, 350, 351
 — Old, 207, 344, 350
 Rosherville, 35
 Royal Military Canal, 319, 323,
 325, 333, 334, 341

 ST. AUGUSTINE, 67, 180, 182-4
 St. Augustine's Cross, 178
 St. Lawrence, 177
 St. Margaret-at-Cliffe, 261
 St. Margaret's Bay, 262-9
 St. Nicholas-at-Wade, 129
 St. Peter's, 165, 197
 Samphire, 298-301
 Sandgate, 315-18
 — Castle, 223, 316
 Sandown Castle, 223
 Sandwich, 121, 125, 127, 168,
 185, 188-213
 Sarre, 124, 126, 129, 185, 197,
 210, 229, 241, 330
 Scrapsgate, 79
 Seabrook, 319
 Seasalter, 105
 Shakespeare's Cliff, 283, 288,
 298, 302, 305
 Sheerness, 50, 52, 66, 70-72, 101
 Shellness, 83, 84, 89, 106
 Sheppey, 2, 66, 68-87, 94, 106
 Shepway, Court of, 329-32
 "Ship" inn, Greenwich, 21
 Shorncliffe Camp, 319
 Shornemead Battery, 39, 40
 Shurland Castle, 74, 82
 — Sir Robert de, 74
 Sittingbourne, 94, 96-9

 Smallhythe, 355-8
 "Steddy Hole," 307
 Stoke, 50
 Stonar, 179, 188-90, 197
 Stone, 31
 Stone-in-Oxney, 353
 Strood, 56
 South Foreland, The, 264, 268
 Swale, The, 3, 66, 67, 83, 87,
 88, 94
 Swalecliffe, 115

 TANKERTON, 114
 Teynham, 94, 101
 Thames, River, 2, 5, 15, 50, 52
 — and Medway Canal, 39
 Thanet, Isle of, 121, 124, 125,
 130, 132, 156, 168, 179, 227
 Tilbury Fort, 37, 52
 Tonge, 94

 UPCHURCH, 64
 Upnor Castle, 52-6
 Upper Deal, 215

 WAINSCOT, 52
 Walmer, 197, 210, 222, 234,
 241, 256
 — Castle, 256-60, 316
 Wantsum, 121, 124-9, 179, 185,
 189
 Warden, 80, 114
 Westgate, 3, 132, 140, 142, 227
 Whitebait, 21-3
 Whitstable, 3, 83, 106-15
 Woolwich, 2, 23-6
 Worth, 215

 YANTLET CREEK, 49

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